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CLUB
JOURNAL**

89

1954

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THE CAIRNGORM CLUB JOURNAL

Vol. 17

1954

No. 89

Edited by R. L. MITCHELL

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PUBLISHED BY THE CAIRNGORM CLUB, 34 BRIDGE STREET, ABERDEEN

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THE regular appearance of the *Cairngorm Club Journal* depends on the availability, in good time, of sufficient material. It is therefore primarily in the hands of members themselves. Contributions for No. 90 should be sent, in their final form, to the Hon. Editor, Dr R. L. Mitchell, 125 Cranford Road, Aberdeen, by April 30, 1955. Articles, notes, and illustrations will be welcomed for consideration. Articles should in general be from 1,500 to 3,000 words in length. Photographs submitted need not, in the first instance, be larger than contact prints, provided the negative is available.

Communications regarding advertisements should be addressed to Mr L. B. Perkins, c/o N.S.H.E.B., Millburn Street, Aberdeen.

Included as a supplement to this number will be found the title pages and index to Vol. XVI, and a list of members as at June 30, 1954. Amendments to this list will be included in future issues of the *Journal*, in order to keep members up to date.

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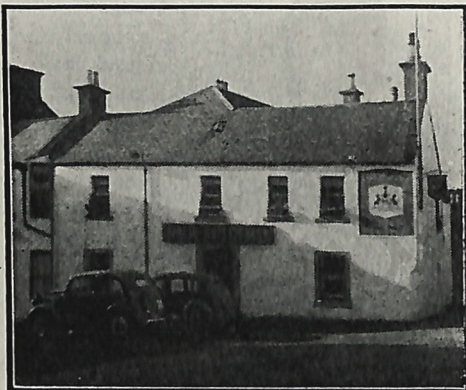
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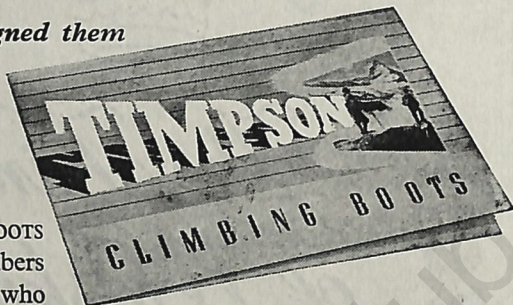
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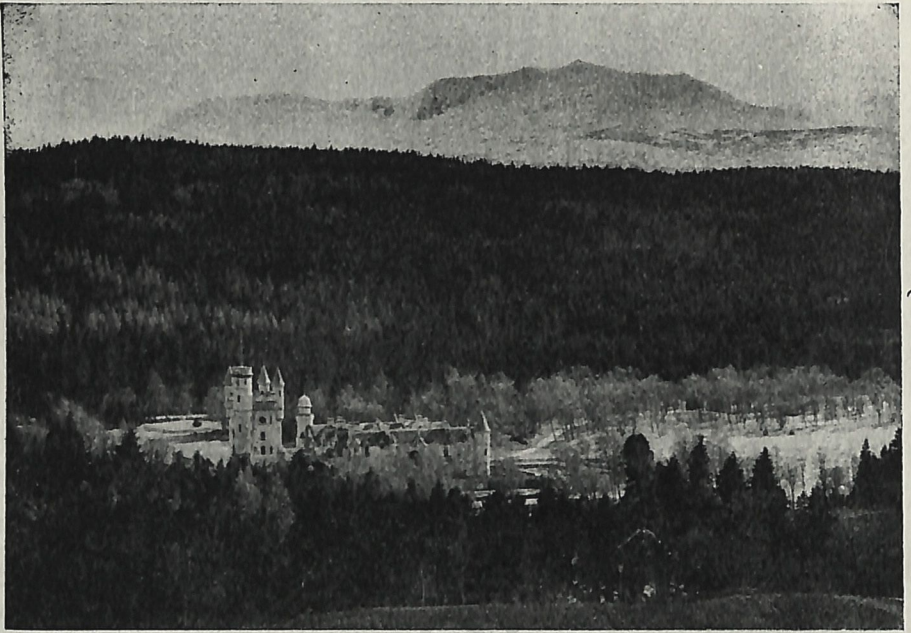
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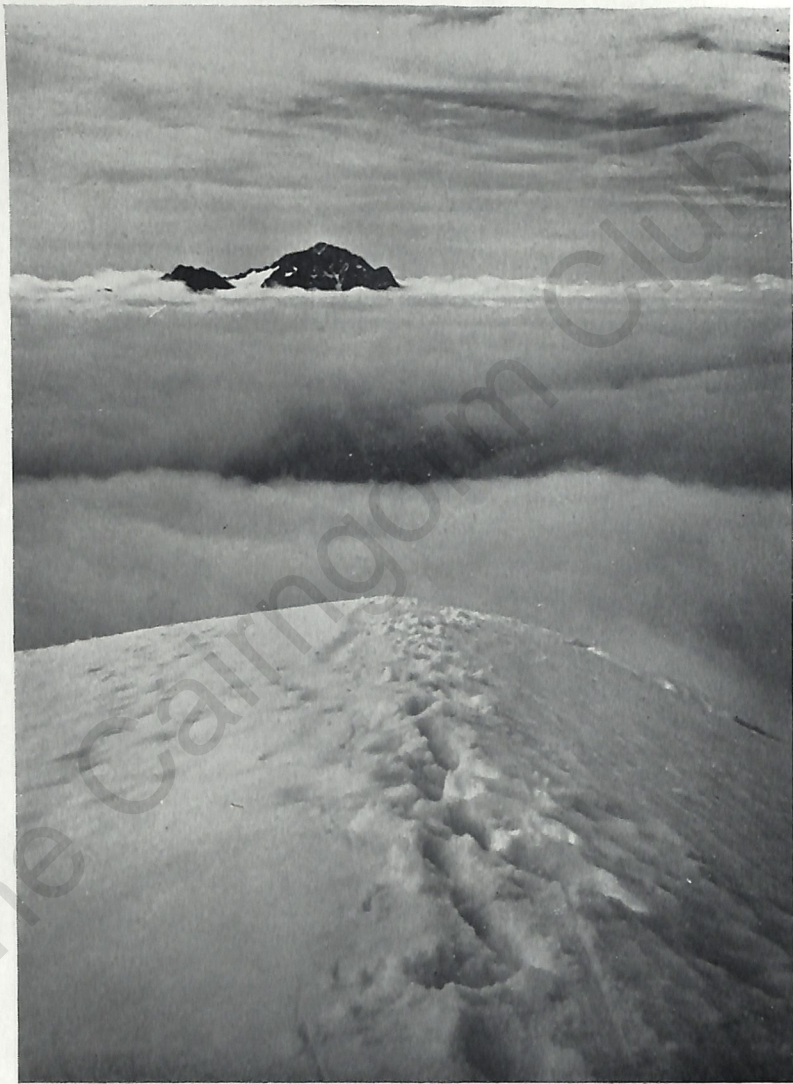
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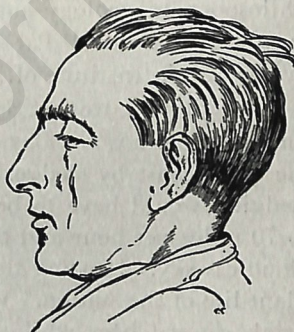
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THE PAST EDITOR

In recording in this number a change of editorship, it is scarcely necessary to acknowledge the debt of the Club to the past editor, W. A. Ewen, who for nineteen years and three volumes has set a standard which those who follow him will find it difficult to equal. Only the original editor, A. I. M'Connochie, exceeded this length of service, and that by only two years. Not one of the other five editors had a tenure of office of ten years.



In recent years not only the Journal has benefited from Ewen's direction; he has been convener of the Huts sub-committee and in Muir of Inverey and Derry Lodge can be found material illustration of his wide interests. His time, too, has been occupied in the affairs of another club, but to our own advantage, as all who have had occasion to use the new edition of the S.M.C. "Cairngorms Guide" will agree. As a member of committee and, we hope, an office-bearer once again, we trust that Ewen's service to the Club will be long continued.

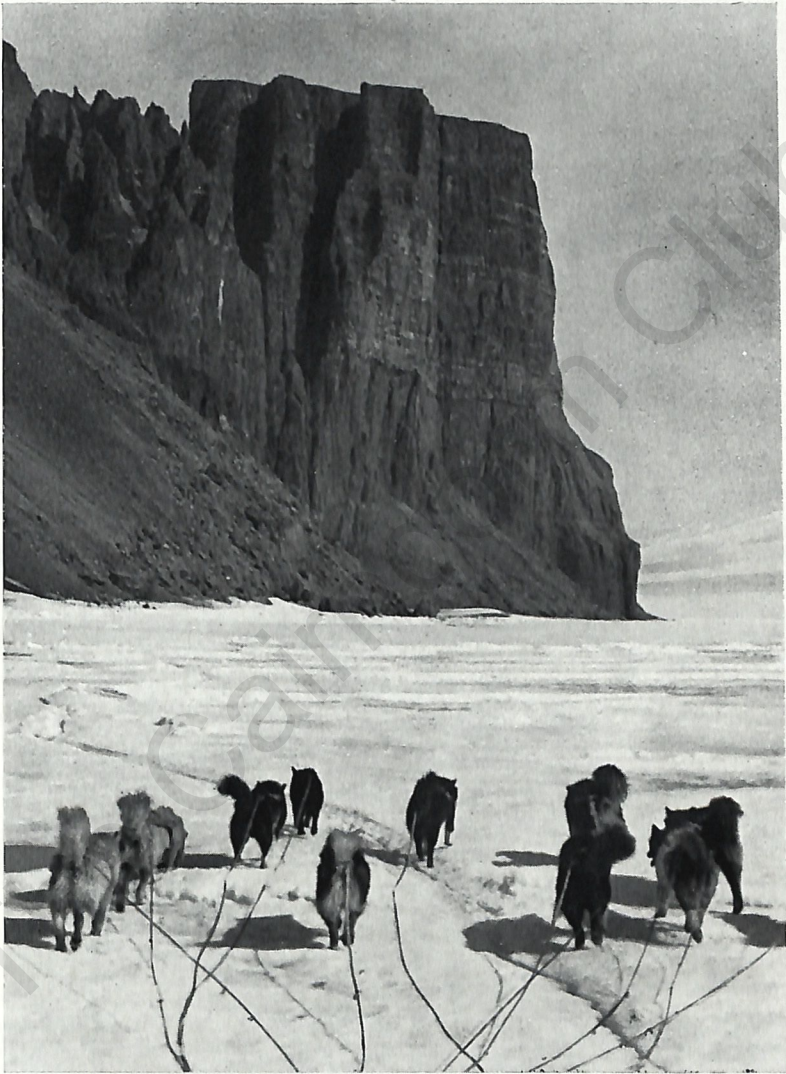
KOMATIK OVER THE SEA

ADAM WATSON

MANY are the wishes of a boy, and how few are fulfilled! One of mine was always to sledge in the Arctic and see the Eskimos; in mid-May last summer I still found it hard to believe it had come true. Yet here we had come in a wee orange ski-plane, like some insect, droning over the wild peaks and ice caps of the Cumberland Peninsula in eastern Baffin Land, to the lonely weather station of Padloping Island, and we were bound for a sledge journey with an Eskimo on the sea ice of the outer coast. With me on this trip was Don Kidd, always a source of wonder to me. Don, though born stone deaf, won his struggle to be able to speak, and has become a Doctor of Philosophy in geology and a keen explorer. We had come here as members of Colonel Pat Baird's 1953 Baffin Expedition organised by the Arctic Institute of North America.

At Padloping we met Samo, a local Eskimo whom Baird had hired through the Hudson's Bay Company at Pangnirtung to take us around the outer coast by sledge. But meantime a storm was brewing and sledging would have to be postponed. Next day it was gusting up to 70 miles per hour and the first thaw of the year had come out of a cloudless sky. Hearing that wind, we could appreciate the hothouse-plant life of the station. We could lie back, eat magnificent food and drink canned beer while watching evening movies. Above all we could enjoy the very fine comradeship in this desperately lonely place, where uniforms were discarded and officers and men swore affably at each other on the best of terms. But we were itching to be away. And so, two days later, it was good to be on the sledge at last, for a start a wild rush down the snow slope to the ice and then smoothly on over a fine, silky surface. It was quite warm and we could easily doze, sitting on the back of the komatik in the sun and looking out over the heads of the dogs. They were in fine fettle, their bushy tails all waving erect like ostrich plumes. They were pulling a load of almost half a ton.

Round the east end of Padloping Island we passed, below great red cliffs where the glaucous gulls shouted at us, and then out to the open sea. And then, around a corner, suddenly there rose a vast wall of towers and pinnacles out of the ice: Cape Searle. Samo announced "Kaxodluin!" the place of the fulmar petrels. A tingle



THE INNER BASTION OF KAXODLUIN

Adam Watson

of satisfaction ran over me. It must certainly be one of the most spectacular sea cliffs in the world. One hour later we were setting up camp on its beach of black sand.

It was blowing hard in the morning when Don and I set off for the top of the island. Vegetation is scanty except below Kaxodluin, the bird cliff. Yet on these bare slopes of dark gravel and scree we found the first catkins of arctic willow already out and purple saxifrage showing tiny pin-points of blood red. Snow buntings were everywhere, the cocks singing lustily from every prominent boulder. On the top we arrived at a shelf looking out to the fantastic inner bastion of Kaxodluin, where 1,500 feet of volcanic rock arose in vertical walls to a flat grassy top edged with great snow cornices and tinged grey with thousands of fulmar petrels. The sky was full of fulmars sailing about the cliffs, and wherever one looked there were fulmars on the ledges. Excitement was at a peak, and now and again waves of loud chattering rose above the roar of the wind, from the fulmars in their sexual display on the ledges. These great bird cliffs never fail to fascinate me. There is a multiple appeal to the senses: The smell of sea-bird dung and rich vegetation; the feeling of verticality and space as you look through fluttering masses of birds down the dizzy walls; the din of the birds, the wind and the sea. Here we had a real mountain rearing up out of the ice. Only 3 miles out, a great strip of inky blue rent the white carpet, and beyond, as far as the eye could see, Baffin Bay was full of ice. Vast icebergs trailed there, like a line of giant soldiers, each one an individual, full of mystery, marching slowly southwards to its doom.

What a wonderful place it would be up there on that airy platform in the midst of the birds. A helicopter could do it. Maybe even it could be climbed. As I looked, I could see a weakness in the keep's defences, where two tremendous parallel gullies split the western face. The right hand one was filled with snow for more than half its length, with rock pitches here and there. The general angle would not be severe. No trace of ice could be seen. The snow would be in good hard condition, and if the rocks were reliable, then the gullies would probably go. Without a climbing companion I couldn't begin to try. Later experience of climbing on some of the shorter pinnacles in Vibrams proved that the rock tended to be dangerously loose. If the keep is ever climbed it will be from this side. Night will be the best time, when the snow is frozen hard and there is less danger of rock-fall.

From the shelf we moved along the crest of the island to the west and finally up an arête of steep snow to the highest peak. Ravens

circled the great northern precipices effortlessly, rolling over on their backs and up again in their display. Up here the view was wide and cold, from far out over the icy sea to the Penny Highlands buried in snowstorm, and north along the bleak snowy coast to Kivitoo. From the top there was a glorious sitting glissade for over 1,000 feet. I paid for it with a hole in the seat of a pair of trousers that were destined later to become a standard expedition joke. The hole was to become so big that I had to sew on a patch of more than a square foot of white canvas, on which the various members of the expedition later wrote their signatures accompanied by rude comments and drawings.

On return to camp I found the dogs had broken in. Happily our food was all in a heavy box covered by stones. But they had worked havoc with my great baking of bannocks, biting them, trampling and fouling them, yet not daring to eat them! One bacon tin had a perfect punched impression of dog's teeth marks on it. That dog must have been frustrated.

We stayed on there for some days, as there was plenty of work to do. In the evenings, talking was a challenge. Don could lip-read, and I used to talk with him, spelling only the difficult words with my finger on the wall of the tent. With Samo it was a mixture of sign language, drawings, Eskimo and English. A grin rarely left his face, and whenever we cracked jokes he would giggle loudly, even though there were few that he could possibly have understood.

On the day we left we packed up at noon and set off for the south. All day it was below freezing, and cold sitting on the komatik. Bump, bump, we went onwards over a bad hummocky surface, and across great leads in the 6-foot thick coat of sea ice. But at last after a long time, the great peaks to the south came nearer. We began to look for a camp site on a long island. This was hard to find, for nothing could be seen but steep rocky slabs dropping to the ice, and unbroken snowfields behind. An exposed little peninsula just gave room for the tent. Soon we had ice melting over the roaring stove, and hot noodle soup revived our flagging spirits.

When we went out again at midnight we saw that the grey skies, as often in the high arctic, had produced only a fluffy dusting of snow. Already it was clearing in the north, where the sky was turning yellow and mauve. The light had that strange quality of colour and sharpness and space that has its home in the far north. In Scotland we just catch a glimpse of it sometimes, especially on the northern seas in the short June night.

Samo had to return to Padloping for more supplies and with a wave he was away again, the dogs, tired now, leaping sluggishly even at the crack of the whip.

Don and I had breakfast of the last of the food, grinning like schoolboys as we spooned jam and peanut butter down our throats. Then off to explore the island. It was a perfect sunny day. The snow had just begun to melt and in sheltered places the vegetation had appeared. There were lots of arctic redpolls, snow buntings sang, and the first pipit we had seen was bursting into a flood of song as it fluttered stiffly down to its little patch of snow-free ground. Then there were ptarmigan, at sea level here, the cocks still snow-white, belching furiously at each other and raising their blood-red combs. Catkins of arctic willow were fully out; from near them a bumblebee droned noisily. Here and there were patches of bearberry and blaeberry plants, and many berries lay there, in good condition after a winter's cold storage.

From the top of the island it was possible to see a long way. To the south lay great mountains, heavily glaciated and rising to over 6,000 feet. Few black spots broke the surface, and even the cliffs were white with ice and rime. What sport a climbing expedition could have here! This area of many fine peaks and glaciers remains totally unexplored. I longed to travel the 30 miles in and climb one of them. But time, so easily forgotten in the arctic, was at our heels now. By the evening Samo had returned with a box of food and two more dogs. For dinner we had a great feast of fried fulmar and ptarmigan breasts, and bannocks with syrup and tea. Then into our double sleeping bags. Samo asked for a paper and pencil, and scribbled happily, letting his imagination run on figures of animals, sledges and grotesque Picasso-like humans. Then my battered mouth-organ came into play with a last flourish. Don turned a puzzled face to us. Finally silence for us too, save for the scratching of a dog outside. The chattering of the redpolls was our reveille.

Padloping was our next move, and we left after another day. It was dull and freezing hard. The sharp edges of snow ice were cutting the pads of the dogs and blood trails darkened the snow. Samo made little boots to fit on to the dogs' feet. Soon they all had their sealskin boots. We had to keep moving toes and arms to prevent freezing. Even Samo's face showed an arctic blaeberry blue through his Eskimo tan. But there was Padloping at last, and the dogs tore on like mad things. Soon we were drinking hot coffee in a hot mess room, and the boys were giving us their news.

We heard a report of an unsuccessful attempt on Everest, then there were important score sheets with the latest baseball news! At our expedition camp on the Penny ice-cap at 6,800 feet, Svenn Orvig and Bill Ward had been having temperatures well below zero. Once again we lived a hothouse-plant existence for a day or two. The dogs were getting a rest, but still no food. Samo was playing snooker in the mess and putting one record after another of hill-billy and Dixieland on the station gramophone! It was quite a shock when he announced that nearly all his dogs had vanished, clearly in search of food. Time had no meaning here. We would just have to wait till they returned. Meantime it was Saturday night, when Captain Lange, the commandant, let the Eskimos have an empty Nissen hut for a dance. There was American square dance music on the gramophone, and Anilik's wife got going with a Scottish reel on the accordion. Lively music, but livelier still was the dancing; strip the willow and the eightsome reel, these and no others! They enjoyed themselves mightily as they padded about in their sealskin boots. This was part of the heritage from the old days of East Scotland whaling. I knew that the whalers had left behind more immortal things than dances, and I looked hard to see if I could detect a trace of Peterhead or Aberdeen in their faces. It was hard to find. Farther south in Pangnirtung there were some who would not look out of place in the streets of Aberdeen.

After the dancing they had tired, and they gossiped at length with each other. A baby yelled and the mother gave it her breast. The women whispered their secrets to each other, and whenever we looked near the younger ones they burst into fits of giggling and hid their faces. Later Lange appeared with tea, and after a while we all went out, into crackling hard snows rosy in the sunglow of night.

Next day Samo's prize husky Oona appeared with a few of his mates, and we decided to set off with the loan of some of "Little" Samo's dogs. "Little" Samo would come on to join us when the rest of the dogs turned up. We left in the afternoon, grey and overcast. The dogs were hungry but in great fettle to be in harness again, and raced down on to the ice. Soon, behind us, Padloping was just another black speck in a white world.

It was late afternoon, and all around us were rocky peaks rising into dense grey clouds. We were rattling on at a great pace on a velvety carpet of new snow on top of the ice. Samo would urge on the dogs, talking softly to them, and the heavy komatik would glide swiftly on like a lightweight ski. We had gone far and the dogs

were hungry, but still there was no sign of seals. We found a good camp site on the sheltered southern side of a rocky peak, and here, in spite of the bleakness of the place, were the first flowers of bearberry and some dwarf birch beginning to show buds of fresh green.

Next morning we awoke to the chorus of howling dogs, the mournful eerie cry of the north that one after another would take up, head raised to the sky. There seemed to be dozens of them. And there was "Little" Samo sleeping outside on his komatik. The dogs must be all back. It was the first of June, a grey cloudy day again and snowing lightly. I set off to look at the land to the north. Here was a hillside rising in slabs and rocky steps, with slopes between covered in hard snow. It was good to get on to these rough gneiss steps and clamber steeply upwards on beautiful holds. Wearing sealskin boots, I had a great feeling of agility and freedom and true contact with the rock, almost as with stocking soles. Even on the hard snow slopes they gave a wonderful grip, as it was possible to curl the toes right into a step. I climbed up, taking the line of least resistance, over fine rock never more than difficult. There wasn't time to go to the top, which was swathed in snow clouds. Back at camp we found that one of Samo's bitches had produced puppies during the night. They were feeling the cold, lying out among the berry plants. They snuggled as hard as they could under their mother. Later they would never feel cold.

We packed up and so on again up the fjord towards the far mountains. It was a long, bitterly cold ride till we stopped to camp on a grassy islet. We had got one seal at last, not much for a score of ravenous huskies. As Samo cut up the seal on the ice, they began their soul-destroying howling, clawing the snow and slavering. We had to force them back with whips, then jump clear as the mass of mad things rushed in. The carcass lay smothered in a frenzy of furry bodies, fighting and yelping and tearing, flesh, bones and blood. Teeth clashed like swords. But soon the living mass fell apart as each individual slunk off, snarling, with a bit of meat, the top dogs with the best cuts. Fighting went on until there was nothing left but skin and blood-stained snow, often the lot of the weakest member of this complete social hierarchy. They must still have been ravenous, for after work next day I returned to camp in time to see one great yellow brute slinking out at the tent door. With a yell of rage I set upon it, but the damage was done. The dogs had chewed through door and food box. Flour and cocoa lay scattered everywhere. Several tins bore their signatures. Their saliva lay over our precious hard

tack. One had eaten half a sealskin boot and a glove. Outside, I found another contentedly chewing a large hole in a skin rug. Still another, the very last word in insult, had eaten Samo's 30 foot long whip! To all this, Samo remained impassive.

That night one of them sniffed out a lemming and we were able to catch it. It looked thoroughly frightened. I considered keeping it as a pet, but at once rejected the idea, as I would then have to carry the extra weight! Next day was Coronation Day and still very cold. That evening we came in sight of the great inland peaks and ice caps and reached the end of the fjord in the Padle Valley.

To-morrow we would set off to cross a pass through the mountains leading to the rest of the expedition. Our packs would weigh 100 lb., an uninviting prospect of what is certainly a form of torture in difficult, snowed-up country. Behind lay the sledge journey; ahead lay—what? We could see a wall of great peaks rising from silky bowls of snow. I could feel awe, a touch of fear, and that vacant feeling in the lower regions that takes one before any big new undertaking, especially into country that is still a complete blank. Yet this as usual was a good tonic and I felt a tingle of exhilaration beyond measure. My only regret, and a great one, was the thought of leaving for good our great companion Samo and his faithful dogs. I wish I were back, riding the komatik again.

WINTER ON THE STACK

T. L. FALLOWFIELD

WE wandered out into the cold darkness of very early morning, a breakfast of haggis and pemmican doing its best to dispel the chill of a bitter night from our aching bodies. The frozen earth rang under our feet as we left the bothy with its floor of ice, but soon the only sounds were the swish of snow and an occasional rude word as one of the party tripped over a hidden boulder. The bothy and its burn had fallen out of sight before the sun rose to thaw our tongues. The point under discussion was whether the glittering crags of Lochnagar would yield to us the jewel we coveted. At the lip of the corrie we saw that while the buttresses were thickly plastered with fresh-blown snow over ice, the gullies contained only an occasional ice-fall. It was plain that for a first winter ascent that day we must turn to a buttress. The Stack with a golden crown of sunlight appeared most desirable and so it was decided.

The frozen loch quickly dispelled our hopes of an easy walk to the foot of the climb by grumbling under weight and our trials started in the deep, soft snow. Ptarmigan running lightly over the surface inspired pardonable feelings of jealousy. It was my misfortune to be in front at this stage and with the threat of an ice-axe point poised by Gordon, I lost no time in ploughing a path up the Spout towards the great overhanging bulk of the Stack. It was now midday but the greater part of the corrie remained in shade.

The first pitch started with a 50 foot slope of thick green ice, but my offers to meet the others on the top, or to go back and have supper ready, were treated with scorn and we roped up. Mike attacked with vigour and had soon traversed round a corner to the right, leaving a neat line of steps. Gordon followed and I left my seat with some reluctance and almost with the loss of an essential part of my trousers, which had frozen on. I joined the others in a small recess on the first platform, where we were temporarily stopped by a vertical wall, plastered with foot-thick snow, and leading to an ice and snow-filled groove. We were now in the central line of the buttress and the overhung drop below was appreciable. Undaunted, the leader said "Press on!" and I was pressed on to the wall so that he might step off my head to reach the base of the groove. He wormed up for some 10 feet, giving us below the impression that it had started to

snow heavily. Gordon took delight in standing on my head and, being left alone, I was not ashamed to give a loud cry of "Tirez la corde" as I attacked the wall.

The next ledge was overshadowed by a huge overhang but Mike pointed out to the right and immediately disappeared. The progress of his rope gradually came to dead slow, ran out quickly for 15 feet, and he had made it. Gordon's successful arrival above took a full run-out and I started round the corner to be confronted by an awful sight. A foot-wide ledge ran slightly upwards to peter out under a mantelshelf; below there was nothing visible but the snow of the Black Spout, separated from me by a vertical 170 feet of air. I could see nothing of my companions, but the rope was being twitched gently from somewhere above. The mantelshelf presented an unforeseen difficulty for I found at the crucial moment that my legs would not bend. Looking down, I saw that my trousers were frozen stiff. I also saw the drop, and with a great heave, accompanied by a cracking sound from my trousers, my face was submerged into the soft snow of an easy slope, at the top of which my companions waited with ribald comments on my mode of ascent.

We were now on a broad terrace, leading us left to seek our passage under the massive overhang of the main buttress. From a good stance and belay, an upward traverse to the left was made into an open snow-filled chimney. Above the chimney a near-vertical slab was crossed with many peculiar contortions on my part. Afterwards, I was told that an ice-axe driven into the snow in a certain place found a small crack, and thus provided a handrail to make it perfectly simple. A rather delicate hand traverse led farther left to further freeze my delicate fingers. But frozen fingers hold well when one's heels are kicking wildly over 200 feet of space. Thirty feet upwards and to the right by two chimneys brought us to an alcove, just too low to allow standing erect and too cold to sit down in, where the party was reunited. Here we discussed the effect of smoking upon the blood-vessels of the skin, with experimentation, but no definite conclusion was reached.

Owing to the continuous hindrance of soft snow which had to be cleared we were now far behind time. We did not regret too much the time wasted beside the loch, for the full moon was rising to give us ample light. The next pitch gave me, as the last member, plenty of time to observe the moonrise, between intervals of standing uncomfortably and sitting even more uncomfortably.

A chimney to the left led upwards to a block, and above it, a shelf

sloping upwards to the right. Mike brought Gordon up the chimney to the block, which was out of my range of vision, and an increasing urgency in the voices above gave me an impression of difficulty encountered. From the top of the block a delicate balance move is made to the outward-sloping ledge. I had gathered from the conversation that the vital holds were buried deep in ice, when the clatter of ironmongery and an apologetic shout indicated that the move had been solved by a piton. There were slow scraping sounds and a tense silence: Mike's voice, a tone higher than usual, announced the possibility of his imminent take-off. The rest was silence, but after several centuries my strained ears could detect no further movements. Then a shower of snow and ice made me look up to see Mike clinging to a wall directly above me. He moved out of sight, called down, and it was my turn.

Once on the block I could see what had happened. The layer of soft snow had suddenly moved off, to leave the leader clawing at the verglas underneath. As I made my way along the shelf, my trousers emitted rhythmic crackling sounds, and above the wall I found two frozen figures unhappily sharing a cigarette.

From the left end of the platform, a tricky snow-covered slab led to easier ground. As the soft snow down our backs froze into solid lumps, Gordon and I apathetically watched the rope slide over the slab, while conversation with the leader was limited to exhortations to speed, mingled with colourful language. Above, we waded along an awkward terrace to the first wall. A long icy crack rising gently to the plateau was overcome by wriggling in the prone position, our discomfort increased by the dangling of a foot in space above the Left-hand Branch.

The beauty of moonlight upon the snow-clad hills demanded that we linger on the top. However, the intense cold and the presence of a small bottle of brandy in the bothy forced us to retreat quickly. The leader had already set off with the utmost despatch and we certainly could not allow him to drink all of it.

CLOCH-NA-BHIEN

REV. GEORGE KNOWLES
MINISTER OF BIRSE, 1750-1789

See, as an instance, on the airy brow
Of yon bleak hill which bounds the southern sky,
A huge black rock o'erhangs the dale below
And seems just tumbling headlong from on high.

That rock, says vulgar fame, was placed of old
Low in a plain with tufted heath o'erspread,
And thus, as our forefathers oft have told,
It was transported from its antient bed.

The Devil and his Dame, in contest fell,
Had waged infernal war for many a day ;
At length they left the darksome deeps of hell
And came to yonder hill to end the fray.

Long, long they strove, and Satan nothing gained,
His Dame still louder roared with frantic brow ;
His vengeful wrath no more could be restrained
And down he rushed into the plain below.

Yon rock, itself a mountain, up he tore
From its old seat in yonder shaggy plain,
Upon his shoulders the huge mass he bore,
And quickly hied him up the hill again.

Again the infernal fury raised her voice,
The horrid sound rung through the echoing wild,
While rocks, amazed at the terrific noise,
Stood trembling like the goblin-frighted child.

Have at you now, you Beldame, roared the fiend,
And hurled the rock through the resounding skies :
Dreadful it fell, and crushed his breathless friend,
And there entombed her hellish highness lies.

From the *Scots Magazine*, April 1815.

AMONG THE ARRAN PEAKS AND RIDGES

A. G. DUTHIE

ARRAN has been aptly described as "Scotland in miniature" and indeed it is, for within its 165 square miles is all the beauty of form and colour so typical of the mainland. Nowhere is this more apparent than in its mountains and glens famed far beyond their precincts. The island's compactness is one of its attractions and much can be seen and done during a visit lasting a week or a fortnight. Favoured with fine weather in late spring or high summer a holiday spent in this delectable island will ever remain a memorable experience. When autumn too spreads her tints over hill and glen there is much to charm the eye and mind. Like all small islands Arran has its own individuality, and although the trend of modern times has penetrated into some of its corners enough remains of the Arran of old to put a charm on all who visit it for the first time.

To hill lovers the magnificent grandeur of its peaks and ridges offers an irresistible appeal and awakens the sporting instincts of the rock climber. Seen from the Ayrshire coast on a clear day, the serrated peaks of grey granite reach up to the sky in bewildering array. Often as not, battalions of great white cloud advance over the soaring pinnacles bringing a fine sense of majesty to the scene—it is a challenge to limb and endeavour. Viewed from afar, many of the peaks look forbidding and unclimbable, but on closer acquaintance a somewhat different aspect is appreciated as paths and routes can be followed to the summit of each. There is a strange fascination and wealth of meaning in their names, among them Goatfell (the peak of the wind), Beinn Nuis (the hills of the fawns), Caisteal Abhail (the forked castle) and Ceum na Caillich (the witch's step). The stark setting of the grey precipices is softened by the verdant freshness of Glen Rosa and Glen Sannox, each of whom offers easy access to the towering giants above them. Few, if any, mountain districts in Britain can have two such glens of outstanding beauty and they form an ideal approach to the sterner tasks ahead. Much has been written and said about their respective merits and among the local inhabitants opinion is divided. Artists have added their story in colour, showing the sublime beauty of these areas in all their moods. The glens are divided by a fine ridge known as the Saddle which drops steeply from the north top of Goatfell, and each is dominated at its head by the

bold massive peak of Cir Mhòr. Glen Rosa (its very name is music) is good to look upon throughout its entire length and in its setting has perhaps a little more variety than its rival Glen Sannox. Its outlook towards Brodick with its fine beach and sylvan woods is very attractive. Down through the glen the lovely Rosa stream wends its adventurous way to the shore. Just under two miles from the foot of the glen the fine falls of Garbh Allt race and tumble down a narrow gorge to join the stream far below. Opposite it a long steep ridge culminates in the shapely peak of Goatfell. From the high ground above the falls a path leads to Beinn a' Chliabhain from the summit of which is obtained the finest comprehensive view of the Arran peaks. Looking east the Bay of Brodick and Holy Isle form an integral part of an enchanting panorama which stretches over the Firth of Clyde to the Ayrshire coast and far beyond. From the summit cairn a steep descending path leads eventually to the Bealach an Fhir Bhoga (pass of the bowman) and from here a wonderful view is obtained of A'Chir, the finest rock ridge in Arran. A traverse of this mighty ridge is a difficult proposition and certainly not for beginners, where a slip here, especially in the mist, may result in serious consequences. A path some distance below the summit rocks is, however, much safer for the novice and will lead to other good view points in the vicinity. From the bealach a fairly stiff scramble over a large outcrop of rocks takes one to the top of Beinn Tarsuinn and a grand ridge walk due south from this point terminates at the cairn of Beinn Nuis, quite one of the finest looking peaks in the entire range. The view from the summit cairn of Beinn Nuis is one of the finest seen from a Scottish mountain and embraces a wonderful panorama of mountain, sea and loch. Looking across the narrow Kilbrennan Sound the long arm of Kintyre, with the lonely Sanda Isle near its southerly tip, forms an unforgettable picture. If the day is particularly clear the far off coast of Ireland can be seen. I was fortunate to obtain such a view, nor will I forget the sight of Ailsa Craig rising sheer out of a sparkling sea like some bright jewel. A halo of white cloud round it shared its loneliness to complete a scene that will long haunt the memory. At the head of Glen Rosa the scene is one of mountain grandeur at its finest and looks really like a meeting place of the grandest peaks in Arran all showing their steepest faces to the Glen. Monarch of all is undoubtedly Cir Mhòr with the wonderful Rosa Pinnacle bearing proudly its unique rock formations. Little wonder that it is well known as a Mecca for the rock expert and provides the finest climbs in the whole area. Cir



CIR MHÒR, SOUTH FACE

A. G. Duthie

Mhòr can be climbed the easy way via the Nuis-Tarsuinn ridge and the path below the formidable A'Chir. The view from its narrow summit is superb, particularly when looking down on Glen Sannox and Glen Rosa. The feeling of height when standing or sitting on this airy pinnacle is breathtaking. A lady with whom I stayed near the foot of Glen Rosa confessed that although she had climbed all the highest mountains in Arran this was the one summit upon which she did not feel too happy. The fantastic drop of the precipices on three sides proved almost too much for her.

Although all the major summits can be ascended from Glen Rosa, it is advisable to spend a few days at Corrie in order to gain easier access to Glen Sannox and its surrounding mountains. Corrie with its whitewashed houses skirting the sea-front and its picturesque cottages spread out so charmingly on the tree-lined hillside above provides a lovely foreground to the Sannox hills. It is an enchanting neighbourhood and a fine starting-off point for Glen Sannox. Cioch na h-Oige on one side of the glen and Suidhe Fhearghas on the other command attention, but both lead to even finer things ahead. From Suidhe Fhearghas a long exhilarating ridge leads to the magnificent Caisteal Abhail (the forked castle). Here is a notable instance of a mountain really looking like its name. Huge bastions of rock, not unlike the turrets of a castle break the continuity of the summit ridge. Before reaching it, a traverse of Ceum na Caillich (the witch's step) has appropriately a little touch of wickedness about it and is not for beginners. From the highest point of Caisteal Abhail the view is tremendous, and in many ways comparable to that of the one from Beinn Nuis. The view to the north of the Kyles of Bute and the Cumraes is exceptionally fine and the full glory of the lands of Cowal and Argyll are revealed at their best, divided as they are by that gem of Scottish lochs—Loch Fyne. The famous mountain ridges of Argyll reach to the far horizon in an overwhelming display of mountain splendour.

No description of the Arran mountains would be complete without Goatfell, not only the highest peak in the island, but also in every way the best-known. Hundreds make their first acquaintance with it every year and for many it is the first and only climb of their visit. Viewed from land or sea it is a handsome looking mountain, monarch of all it surveys, and although an ascent of it is little more than a walk it is nevertheless a memorable one. Few mountains can have such a lovely approach, rising as it does above the sweeping curve of Brodick Bay. The path is perhaps at its finest above the policies of

Brodick Castle, especially in early June when the matchless beauty of the wild rhododendrons in full bloom skirts the path which winds through the woodland. A long slow climb it is to the summit cairn surrounded by its large formations of rock, but once this high viewpoint is attained the climber is well rewarded. An unbelievable panorama meets the eye in every direction as though a giant map was enfolded and placed at one's feet. Rising above loch and sea, glen and village, mountain follows mountain round almost every point in the compass. The Paps of Jura, Ben More in Mull, and from Ben Nevis to the Pentlands the breadth and wonder of the panorama seems never-ending. It is even claimed that on a particularly fine day of visibility Skiddaw in the Lake District can be seen. The Peak of the Wind offers much and it rests in the lap of the gods as to weather and visibility; they alone hold the key to a unique experience.

It is not difficult to understand why mountaineers return to Arran again and again, for the island has a charm of its own and each season brings its own particular appeal. With every visit a new aspect and a new thrill is experienced from the narrow path, the airy pinnacle and the windswept ridge. Here can be found the true peace and grandeur of the everlasting hills.

THE STAG ERRANT: A BEDTIME STORY

D. L. MACKAY

My story goes back some years, but that is of no moment, because the hills are timeless and steadfast, the same to-day, now and forever. I hadn't been long bitten by the bug of hill climbing and walking, and had one ambition—to spend a week-end in the hills, quite alone, and really absorb the perennial joy of my beloved Cairngorms. Although I had previously spent nights on the high tops in club company, on this occasion discretion became the better part of valour, and I decided to spend both nights under cover at the Luibeg bothy and to make an early start for the high tops in the morning.

At that time Luibeg cottage was uninhabited, but there was a keeper living at Derry Lodge a short distance away. He had only recently come to the Cairngorms, being formerly a lowland keeper, and, as such, was not regarded by the highland keepers as being in the same class at all. But he was a good friend to me, although given very much to macabre humour, as you will hear.

He was aware of my impending arrival, and, as I expected to be late getting in the first night, I told him not to wait up for me but to leave the door of Luibeg unlocked.

I arrived at Braemar at sunset on the evening in question and lost no time in setting my feet in rhythmic motion for the ten mile tramp to Derry. It was a still tranquil evening but the shadows were lengthening rapidly. Soon after Inverey I fell in with a companion who accompanied me to the Derry gate where the 4 mile path by the side of the Lui wound its upward way to Derry. Just as we were about to go our separate ways the silence of the now starlit night was broken by the terrifying roaring of the rutting deer. To hear these roars in the dark of the night is to remember them for ever. My companion made one remark, "Nice company you are going to have," and vanished into the shadows. How prophetic his words I didn't know at that time.

I shall never forget the sheer delight of that slowly ascending tramp through the velvet starry night of late autumn; my ears attuned to all the little noises and rustlings in the dark, the vibrant silence shattered at intervals with the thundering roars. My eyes had become accustomed to the darkness and I could distinguish the

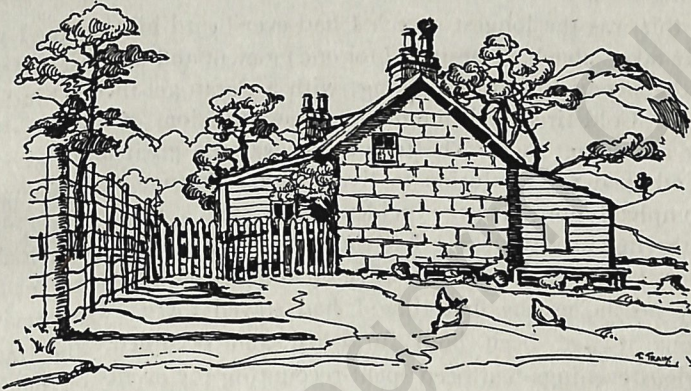
landmarks. Once or twice I saw the deer silhouetted on the skyline as the horizon lightened and then closed down again.

The keeper—let us call him Jock—was waiting for me at Derry and took me to Luibeg cottage where I found a blazing wood fire, and upstairs a pile of soft clean straw for my bed. He had laid in a stock of wood. I had food in my rucksack, warm clothes, a fire and a bed—my cup was full. Perhaps my conscience did prick a little—had I not intended to “rough it”? Still this was a beginning, perhaps next time I would be a little more Spartan. But I didn’t know what was coming to me; for all the use that bed was, I might as well have been tramping all night in the corries. Jock bade me good night and said he would look in in the morning to see if I had slept. I thought he emphasised “slept” a little, but did not heed at the time. I promised to let him know my itinerary for the next day “just in case,” and closed the door on my exquisite aloneness.

He could hardly have reached Derry before it started. The silence was shattered by the now familiar rutting roar, but so near the cottage the windows almost rattled. I peered through the window but could see nothing in the dark. Again it came, and again and again. Round and round the house the noise seemed to be moving, always close at hand, never any farther away. Why doesn’t he move off, I wondered. Rutting stags don’t stay down at habitations at this time of the year. However, I was not sufficiently brave to go out to investigate, so after a picnic supper went upstairs to settle down to sleep. Sleep! That roar would waken the dead.

All night long with resounding, monotonous regularity it went on. I quite soon gave up all attempts to sleep, and went downstairs again where I relit the fire. A comfortable looking chair left behind as wreckage by the previous tenants would serve as my resting-place for the rest of the night. But the comfortable look was only a snare and a delusion. Never before had I realised I had so many bone projections. Tending the wood fire to keep off the cold and chill of the early morning hours kept me occupied whilst the roars went on ceaselessly. When the first faint tinge of dawn began to peep through the window, I decided to wait another half hour before beginning breakfast and preparations for the day’s climb. That half hour was my undoing. I fell asleep in the uncomfortable chair. When I awoke it was full day and perfect silence reigned. Alarmed and angry with myself I hastily set about making up for this loss of time, but it was already 8.30 and my plans to leave at 7 were beyond redeeming.

A glance out of the window showed me Jock approaching. I was still angry with myself, and in answer to his cheery "Good morning, did ye sleep weel?" I merely said I had unfortunately "slept in" and gave no indication whatever of my troubled night. I was sufficiently irritable to want neither scorn nor sympathy; I couldn't make out from his slightly sardonic expression which of these I should get. "See you when you get down," he said, "and see and tak care o' yersel'." With that he strode off.



It was a glorious day as I started up Glen Lui, and very soon my anger and bad temper wore off. Who could stay surly for long in such surroundings of sheer joy. The deep blue of the sky with wispy white clouds scudding across; the browns and reds of the dying heather and the green of the moss against the dark splash of the summit rocks. Of my itinerary of the day I will be very brief, for, after all, this is just a stag story. I had hoped to follow Devil's Point by the long traverse to the summit of Cairn Toul, but my late start rather put the summit of Cairn Toul out of the question as I had promised Jock to be down before dark. Consequently after ascending Devil's Point I crossed the top of Coire Odhar and had a very pleasant saunter along the ridge towards the summit of Cairn Toul. Working on the time principle I reluctantly turned when just short of a mile from the cairn. Returning via Coire Odhar to the Corrour Bothy I found my descent had been very rapid and I would have time on my hands after all. Although I had done Cairn Toul on previous excursions in company, I instantly regretted not making the top on this, my lone expedition.

Darkness was just falling when I arrived at Luibeg after a very leisurely descent. This time no blazing fire awaited me, and as I set

about kindling it, footsteps sounded on the threshold. There stood Jock and the following conversation ensued.

“ I see ye’re doon, lassie.”

“ Yes,” I agreed “ I’ve had a lovely day.”

But I didn’t enthuse much because I was still regretting my lost top.

“ Niver min’ the fire, lassie, come awa o’er tae the lodge. Ma niece wha keeps hoose for me has got a bed for ye. She disna’ like ye biding here.”

As this was the longest speech I had ever heard him make, I was slightly taken aback. I hesitated for one moment and was lost. It was quite the wrong time to be strong, with a Satan-get-thee-behind-me attitude. Cold tired and hungry I had swift visions of a hot cooked supper and a soft bed. The temptation was too great and away on the wind sped my resolution to live rough. Strange as it seems, I had completely forgotten the incident of the stag.

Gathering up my gear I left the little cottage. As Jock locked the door, I stood gazing at the scene of so many happy hours, for this was by no means the first time I had stayed there. On previous occasions it had been both furnished and occupied, and many uproarious evenings had been spent recounting the events of the day. But this was the first time I had seen it empty and deserted, and I felt a little as though the heart had gone out of it. The little stone building was only dimly visible now in the gathering darkness, with its outhouse alongside and the little patch of rough grass beside it enclosed by a high stockade, where, I suppose, at one time the keeper had kept his cow, pony or goats, well protected by the high wire fence from foxes, deer or other marauding creatures.

The meal over and chairs drawn up before the blazing fire, Jock surveyed me with a slightly rheumy eye. “ So you had a guid nicht. Did you no hear the bit staggy ? ”

Instantly recollection sprang upon me, and I confessed about my lively night. Could he explain the phenomenon, I inquired. A slow grin spread over his face, and the devilish gleam in his eye so startled me that I was glad of the presence of his niece. After a pause he said, “ When I was doon lichting yer fire there was a stag inside the fence. Och, lassie, I thocht ye might be likin’ company so I jest shut the gate and left him in. I let him oot in the morn afore ye was up.”

Needless to say I forgave him because the tea was good, and I did have a warm soft bed that night.

THE CAIRNGORMS NATURE RESERVE

ON July 9, 1954, the Nature Conservancy formally declared the establishment of the Cairngorms Nature Reserve, the fourth of their Scottish Nature Reserves, considerably the largest in Great Britain, and one of the largest in Europe.

The establishment of this Nature Reserve finds its origin in Inverness, where on January 20, 1953 representatives of the County Councils concerned, the Forestry Commission, and the Nature Conservancy, together with the proprietors, met to discuss the possibility, and a resolution was unanimously carried urging the Conservancy to establish the Reserve under Section 16 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949. Of the total area, some 62 square miles, the Conservancy have acquired by purchase the higher land of Invereshie, which constitutes less than one-sixth of the whole; the remainder continues in the care of the existing owners or their agents, Lt.-Col. J. P. Grant, the Younger, of Rothiemurchus, Major J. H. Drake of Inshriach, and the Trustees of the late Duke of Fife, who have agreed with the Nature Conservancy to set aside the lands concerned as a National Nature Reserve.

This project, which took eighteen months to fulfil, posed many problems before a satisfactory reconciliation of all the various interests could be formed; inevitably there was speculation during the progress of negotiations which the parties concerned naturally wished to treat as confidential, and rumour had a field-day. To the enthusiasm and public spirit of the proprietors who entered into agreement with the Conservancy a great deal is owing; likewise the Conservancy appreciated the foresight and stimulant provided by the County Councils who first urged the project and, together with representatives of mountaineering and other organisations, were forward in recommending suitable provision for public interests.

The purpose of establishing this Reserve is to preserve the valuable plant and animal life in its wild state against exploitation and against the destruction of species particularly characteristic of the region. It forestalls the dangers, to-day all too familiar, arising from the disintegration of the economic foundation upon which the long-term management of estates has hitherto been borne out of private funds.

The Cairngorms owe their wild and unfrequented character largely to their inhospitability and freedom from human development. Their wildness is one of their chief distinctions and is an attraction to hardy walkers, climbers and naturalists, while also providing a refuge for rare species of animals and plants. The Conservancy's aim is to preserve this wildness as a permanent inheritance for those who will both appreciate it and accept its obligations. It is hoped and expected that walkers and climbers will avail themselves of the opportunities which will be afforded to them in the Reserve of getting to know about nature conservation and its requirements, and that when they share the Cairngorms country with its remarkable wild life, they will leave its animals and plants none the worse for their visits. The Nature Conservancy are represented in the Reserve by wardens familiar with mountain country who should be regarded as being there to help those who visit the Cairngorms, as well as to protect the animals and plants and to guard against fire and other dangers.

From time to time proposals may arise for the economic exploitation of something in the Reserve or for the provision of some more expensive form of access facilities for those who are assumed to be incapable of getting there on their two legs. The Conservancy will resist (and will hope to have the support of all Cairngorm lovers and of the interested sportsmen and landowners in resisting) such projects and demands as are inconsistent with the permanent maintenance of this wild area in the state in which it has been handed down to us. If the natural protection of the fauna and flora were to cease to be safeguarded by the effort required to visit the Cairngorms, either they would suffer heavy losses or severe restrictions would have to be imposed on visitors; neither of these difficulties will arise if the existing access situation is maintained. The Conservancy will, however, always be ready to assist, wherever possible, in reducing inconvenience and risk to walkers in the area by the provision of, for example, footbridges or other minor works or improvements.

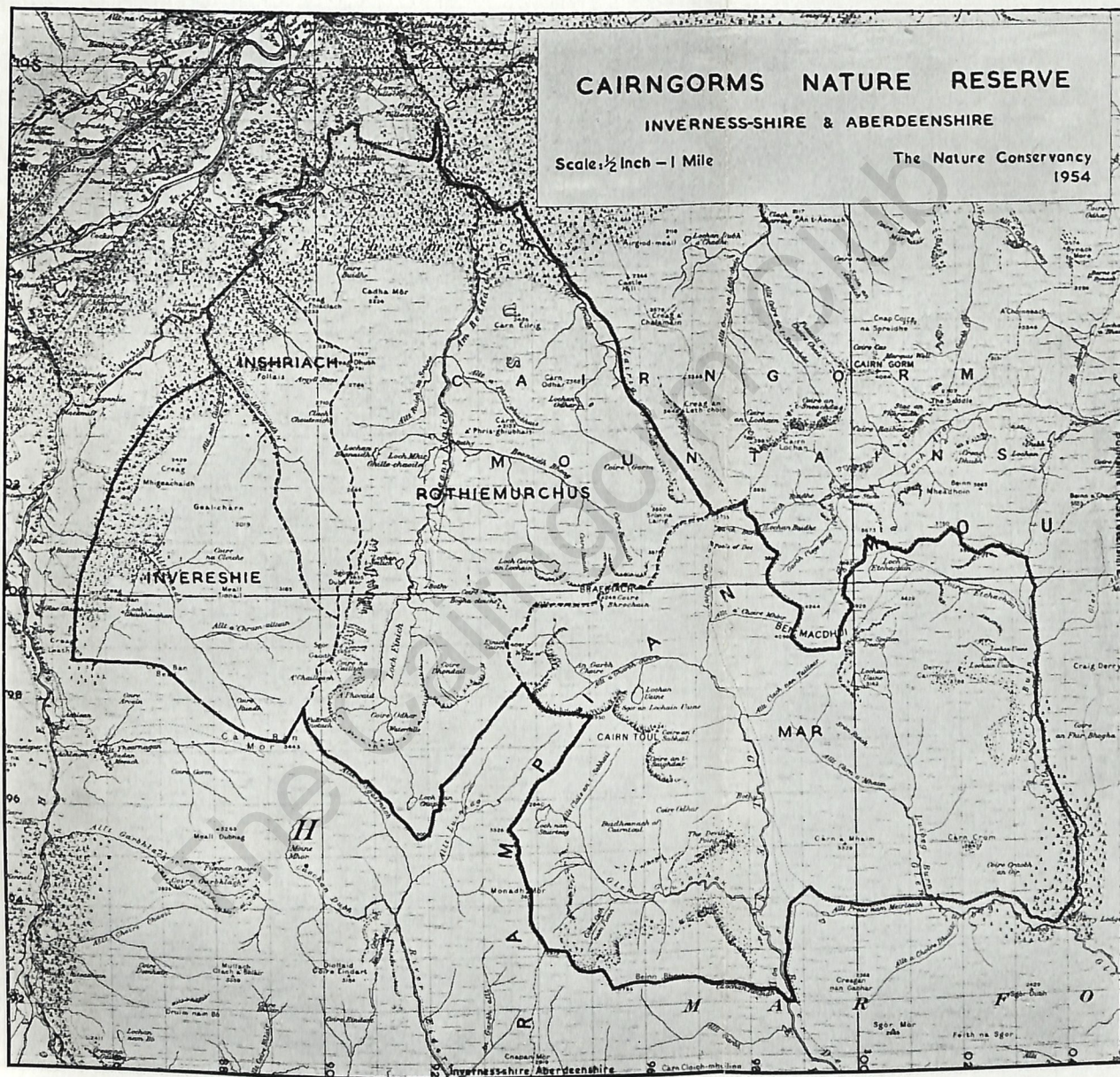
Under the Nature Reserve agreements existing landowners retain their normal rights and obligations except insofar as these are specifically limited by the agreements. For example, under the agreements sporting rights will be preserved, but the species which may be shot either as game or as pests are defined and limited. Stalking rights are not, however, among the rights which the Conservancy have taken over from the proprietors. The main effect of the agreements is that the owners have bound themselves and their

CAIRNGORMS NATURE RESERVE

INVERNESS-SHIRE & ABERDEENSHIRE

Scale: $\frac{1}{2}$ Inch = 1 Mile

The Nature Conservancy
1954



successors in title that this land becomes a Nature Reserve under agreements made between the Nature Conservancy and themselves. These arrangements enable the Conservancy to act as a kind of trustee for the welfare of the area and its wild life. For example, the Conservancy are not only to be consulted over any material change proposed by others, but will be entitled to prevent (where this seems necessary) the cutting down of trees, and to pay compensation for any actual loss involved in preserving the character and scientific interest of the area. The Conservancy, on their part, are keenly determined to restrict to a minimum its interventions in matters affecting the landscape or the enjoyment of the Cairngorms by visitors, and any idea that after the declaration of the Nature Reserve the visitor would find dramatic changes, either in the area or in the conditions of access to it, has proved wide of the mark. The Conservancy have come to conserve, not to disturb.

The Conservancy will, however, be carrying on quietly a programme of scientific investigations. This will cover a number of problems important to the welfare of the fauna and flora; for example, the natural regeneration of native Scots pine in the remnants of the Caledonian Forest, the population and biology of the ptarmigan and other mountain species, and the relations of predators and prey. A wide variety of opportunity offers itself to the inquisitive naturalist: studies of insect migrations, plant association with particular attention to the snow-line, meteorological recordings, the erosion of mountainsides, bird species, red and roe deer and their effects on natural regeneration of forests, and many other studies.

The position of the public as regards rights and privileges on a Nature Reserve is not in the first instance affected by the advent of the Nature Conservancy. The declaration of a Reserve has no effect on the public who are as free to walk about the area after the declaration as they were before it.

In the Cairngorms, the proprietors continue to enjoy the same rights at common law as before, the Conservancy being the new owner of the higher land of Invereshie and sharing identical rights. No new rights or powers have been conferred by the Cairngorms agreements upon the private proprietors; no existing ones have been removed or modified; there is nothing in the agreements between the Conservancy binding the private proprietors to take either a more or less liberal attitude to the public than hitherto. The only means of restricting the public is the imposition of bye-laws; at the present time none are in force as regards this Reserve; the Conservancy's

policy hitherto has been to take their time sizing things up before proceeding to make bye-laws.

It may be, however, that bye-laws will later be found necessary to safeguard wild life. These would no doubt be directed against specific acts of wrongdoing: the theft of birds' eggs, removal of timber, causing fires, and other damage to animal and plant life. It remains to be seen how far they may be needed, and the Conservancy's wardens and the private proprietors prefer to trust that the public will join them in preserving this natural heritage. If bye-laws should prove necessary it is not anticipated that they would affect public access.

Alive to the appreciation of nature-lovers of this splendid area and indeed anxious to stimulate it yet further, the Conservancy held consultations with a wide variety of organisations, not only mountaineering clubs but also other open-air interests, as well as County Councils, and as provision for public rights and interests set up a Cairngorms Consultative Panel on which these organisations and County Councils are represented. All matters affecting the *status quo* of the public are to be referred to this panel. The first meeting of the panel was held in Aberdeen on June 28, when the position of public rights and access was reviewed, and consideration was given to mountain rescue, improved facilities, and other matters affecting the public.

If bye-laws should prove necessary, the procedure is that they would go in draft form to the panel. Ultimately they would have to go to the Secretary of State for confirmation, the public being given the usual opportunity to lodge objections. Once bye-laws were in force, it would be open to any member of the public to report offenders to the police; the institution of proceedings would be a matter for the Crown, the Conservancy having no such powers to act. One other point is noteworthy. It is open to the Conservancy at any time to add to or take from the area of a Reserve, so long as each variation of the boundaries is accompanied by a declaration publicly announced.

THE SNOWY OWL :

AN ARCTIC BIRD IN THE CAIRNGORMS

ALEX. TEWNION



NOT many birds haunt the high plateaux of the Cairngorms in summer. Of the few species which regularly do so, three are classed as rare—the dotterel and the snow bunting, both of which breed there in very limited numbers, and the golden eagle, which comes only to hunt for prey. The recent summer occurrences of another rare species, the snowy owl (scientifically named *Nyctea scandiaca* (Linnaeus)), are therefore of special interest not only to ornithologists but to all familiar with the region. Climbers particularly will be very interested, for to them is due the credit for the most recent observations in the Cairngorms; and it is very probable, too, if the solitary snowy owl concerned returns in future years, that its movements will be traced chiefly from climbers' reports.

There is no mistaking the snowy owl for any other species. Chiefly a diurnal hunter, it is one of the most impressive of birds : a very large, white, round-headed owl, with a half-hidden black bill and fierce-looking yellow eyes. The male stands about 20 inches high and the female 2 or 3 inches more. The wing span is broad, not much short of 4 feet. Such a large bird can look very intimidating in flight, and one young lad confessed to me that he felt quite alarmed when he saw the Cairngorms bird in 1952. It is reassuring to know, however, that except at its breeding grounds, which lie in Spitzbergen, Greenland, Baffin Land and other Arctic countries, it does not attack human beings. The male's plumage may be snowy white all over, sometimes lightly flecked or barred with brown, especially on the wings. The female is also white but is generally much more barred with brown. From available descriptions, the bird which has been frequenting the Cairngorms seems to have been a male. In the *Scottish Naturalist* (Vol. 64, pp. 176-177), where its occurrence was

first recorded, it is described as "exceptionally immaculate, and appeared wholly white except on the closest scrutiny."

The interest in this bird centres chiefly on the fact that it is the first of its kind known to have summered in Britain. The species is an irregular visitor here, mainly to north Scotland in winter; but a few birds have been seen in summer, generally on passage. Then at the end of May 1952, Miss V. Cromar, daughter of Mr Charles Cromar, warden at Glenmore Lodge, saw "a great white owl like an eagle" flying across the high plateau of the Cairngorms. That was the first time it was sighted, but Mr Van den Bos, a Lincolnshire ornithologist, saw and recognised it as a snowy owl on June 19, when he followed it about across a shallow corrie for more than an hour. Describing it later, he said that when it perched on top of a boulder it looked just like a small snowman, with the same rounded form and three black dots in its face marking its bill and eyes. One habit he noticed was also stressed by later observers: when disturbed, the owl nearly always alighted in a prominent position which gave it an all-round view.

On June 21, Messrs Adam Watson, senior and junior, climbed to the corrie and saw the owl; and it was again seen in the same corrie on June 29, by a party of five which included the Watsons and Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards. After that it disappeared from human ken. But in the summer of 1953 it returned—for it is scarcely conceivable that another very white snowy owl would appear so soon after in the same place. Although it was seen by various parties, the earliest sight record that I know of occurred on July 19, when Miss E. J. Lawrence and Messrs J. E. Bothwell, R. L. Mitchell and R. Still saw it on the plateau about half a mile from its customary corrie. It was perched, very white and conspicuous, on top of a rock. At first they thought it was a peculiarly shaped piece of quartz which someone had placed there; but on approaching closer they realised it was a strange bird standing there, quite motionless, except for its head, which gradually turned to watch them as they drew nearer. When they were about twenty yards away the owl rose and flapped silently across the plateau towards the top of some distant cliffs. This party thought the owl was about the size of a big herring-gull, and considered the whiteness of its plumage very impressive. They also remarked on its lack of fear, and its absolute silence on the ground and in flight.

The latest eye-witness account came from Mr James Bruce, of Aberdeen, who with a friend encountered the owl on September 13,

about a mile north-west of its favourite haunt. On examining the surrounding area they decided it had frequented the spot for some time past, as they found the skeleton of a mountain hare, picked quite clean, also several skeletons of grouse-like birds, probably ptarmigan, and numerous castings which consisted chiefly of fur and feathers. They marked the site by building a small cairn. Mr Colin Murdoch, of Kingussie, has since then told me that he and Mr Richard Perry, of Newtonmore, investigated a report of a snowy owl seen at the end of September on the Drumochter hills. They failed to see the bird, but possibly it was the same one.

Since it is hoped that this Arctic visitor will return, it is not considered advisable to disclose the exact locality it frequented. Its habitat lay on the plateau above the 3,600 feet level, partly in a big, shallow stony corrie with patches of alpine grassland, partly on the gravelly wastes and alpine meadows surrounding this corrie. This type of ground is in many ways very like that found at its Arctic homeland, where the species feeds on lemmings, voles, mice, Arctic hares and various birds. The Cairngorms bird vies with the eagle by living on similar prey, and also perhaps on smaller fry like voles, mice, shrews and small passerines.

TWENTY-FIVE WAYS OF NOT CLIMBING LOCHNAGAR

L. B. PERKINS

THE crushing responsibilities which beset both President and Meets Secretary on excursions are matched only by the growing familiarity of the scene as the years go by. Golden Square, familiar to the point of boredom, may be enlivened by the boarding of the bus by a member of the wrong club, with consequent eviction, or even by the punctual arrival of a constantly late member.

But when one arrives at the destination and if the destination is Lochnagar and if the day is likely to become wet, one remembers similar days for many years past; similar arrivals; similar routes; one says "Let's try something else." The author of this article has tried something else at least twenty-five times, and passes his information on for the benefit of posterity. Some of the trips are suitable for a short day, and their description may dispel some slanderous suggestions heard from time to time, implying the use of the bus to sleep the day away. All envisage punctual return.

Not climbing Lochnagar from Loch Muick

The circuit of Loch Muick—a beautiful stroll—is hardly adequate for a full day unless it be equally beautiful, and an alternative is to take the steep path which rises beyond the Black Burn and from which one gets an impressive view of the north side of the loch. This path leads one to Bachnagairn in Glen Clova and a return can be made via the Capel Mounth path to Spittal of Glenmuick.

A fuller day is obtained by extending the Loch Muick circuit to include the Dubh Loch, and here again both shores of Loch Muick may be covered. The Allt an Dubh Loch is well worth a visit, and possesses falls and pools which have varying attractions according to weather and temperature. Similar attractions may encourage a visit to the Allt Darrarie, and a search for its source, the Lair of Aldararie overlooking Glen Clova, can be coupled with a return via the Capel Mounth path, or over the fairly level ground to the head of Loch Muick. Other rather similar trips comprise a visit to look down on or descend to Loch Wharral and Loch Brandy, cupped high on the North Wall of Glen Clova, returning by any of a diversity of routes: farther west, Loch Esk, which drains into the South Esk, is reached

by leaving the Bachnagairn path beyond its highest point, and aiming to the south of Craig Gowel, should mist permit.

We must not forget, however, that there are other mountains accessible from Spittal of Glenmuick in addition to Lochnagar, and of these, four provide days of various lengths, depending on the stamina of the travellers or weather conditions. They are Broad Cairn and Cairn Bannoch, an easy pair in kind weather; Tolmount and Carn an-t'Sagairt Mor, possible in such weather, but virtually unreachable if any of the factors which combine to reduce walking speed on the hill come into effect, and the wrath of the Meets Secretary is not to be risked.

Mount Keen is apparently possible from the Linn of Muick, the distance being slightly shorter than from Loch Lee as the crow flies, but as this is not one of the twenty-five ways already traversed it is put into this article as make-weight. The Committee, however, could give due consideration to a future excursion from Loch Lee to the Linn of Muick and Mr Duguid can, in the meantime, perhaps consider how to turn the bus at the latter.

The only Munro on the north side of Loch Muick relevant to this digression is the White Mounth. Although despised by its arrogant neighbour, the White Mounth has four tops—one more than Ben Nevis—and their ascent is an excellent feat, particularly on a misty day, but only if the temptation to take in Lochnagar as well is resisted. The Staic, however, can be included without loss of prestige. A good way to annoy the Meets Secretary is to descend the Staic Buttress and go home without telling anybody. Loch Buidhe, one of the six lochs associated with Lochnagar, provides an easier day, and is very suitable when conditions provide a north wind with sunshine, sheltering as it does under the shoulder of the Lochnagar *massif*.

Two minor hills make up the last of the seventeen sensible ways of not climbing Lochnagar from Spittal of Glenmuick; these are Conachraig, 2,827 feet, from the summit of which one gets a view of the top of the corrie of Lochnagar, and Meall Coire na Saobhaidhe, to the north of Cac Carn Beag. In both cases, and in fact in all the instances mentioned, the avoidance of mention of any places which may be passed incidentally to making a normal ascent of Lochnagar is deliberate—balked ascents are not unknown, and one of the truest attributes of a good mountaineer is the ability to decide to turn back if conditions demand it; but, of course, we cannot provide excuses here for the reluctant climber who falls out half-way!

Not climbing Lochnagar from Ballochbuie

The privilege which has been extended to the Club in obtaining permission to approach Lochnagar through the Ballochbuie Forest for their winter climbs is greatly valued, and is certainly not to be taken for granted. The Ballochbuie is itself a delightful alternative to any climb, and in a day of snow and sun there are few places more beautiful. The Ballochbuie is a great place to get lost in, but members are recommended to get lost there fairly early in the day, as the emotional stress is then considerably less than when darkness is approaching, particularly if there has been a heavy fall of soft snow.

The alternatives to Lochnagar are fewer on this side, however, and one necessarily excludes Beinn a' Bhùird, itself a major avoidable objective, which can conveniently be climbed on a Ballochbuie trip, but merely because the Invercauld gate is only nine-sixteenths of a mile (as the crow flies) from the Danzig Bridge.

The only Munro accessible under the auspices of this article from the Danzig Bridge is, of course, Carn an-t'Sagairt Mor, colloquially Cairn Taggart. The Feandallacher provides the main route and no difficulty usually presents itself, Cairn Taggart being visible from the main road almost invariably up till the rain starts at about 10 a.m. in winter. Cairn Taggart lies on the path from Glen Callater to Lochnagar, a not too common route nowadays, but one which provides a pleasant walk, although outwith the scope of this article, except as a means of ending up in the wrong valley and being really late! This path commences (or ends) very close behind Loch Callater Lodge and is well marked throughout its length.

Two imposing hills, not Munros, form the dividing wall between Glen Clunie and the Ballochbuie Forest. Creag na Dearcaige lies south of Craig nan Leachda and the ridge provides a pleasant winter walk to the Danzig Bridge with the outward journey through the forest following the Glen Beg Burn. The latter route can be followed to the Sluggan, close to which is Loch Phadruig, associated with Cairn Taggart in the derivation of its name, which refers to a Braemar priest named Patrick. Loch Phadruig has the doubtful honour of not being mentioned in the S.M.C. "Guide to the Cairngorms," presumably due to its lack of association with any hill of importance to the mountaineer.

Loch nan Eun and the Sandy Loch can conveniently be visited via Ballochbuie. These lochans, as they really are, lie in the morning shadow of Lochnagar, and can be covered by alternative outward and

return routes. The Blackshiel Burn, in its upper reaches, affords excellent views of the summit of Lochnagar and lies between Meall an Tionail and Cnapan Nathraichean. The way back by the Allt Lochan nan Eun provides fewer opportunities for getting lost in the Ballochbuie than some others.

On the north side of the main road, we know of three trips which can make an enjoyable day. The first is to visit the Invercauld Arms—known to us best as the Inver; but to avoid this particular trip being too obvious as regards intent, one can go west to what must be a very old road, just opposite the old Bridge of Dee and adjacent to the Invercauld gate. This road branches east, close to this point, and traverses some comparatively unknown country. Middleton of Aberarder is passed, desolate and uninhabited, but one or two occupied farms and crofts come into sight before we reach Inver. Returning to the bus along the main road, one notes the banking of the surface, and has an opportunity of observing the various undertakings en route, which fall principally into the classes of forestry, quarrying, fishing, electricity distribution and telephone communications, all of which can appear in duplicate if conditions are right!

The ascent of Culardoch, which is only 47 feet short of a Munro, can be combined with a walk over the Bealach Dearg, an ancient track and a right of way. The road starts in the vicinity of Invercauld House, and seems to form part of a through route north to Inchrory. A return via the Feardar Burn (and Inver!) provides an interesting round. Instead of over Culardoch, the return can be made by the Gairn, which is ascended as far as its source near Carn Eas, and the Sluggan.

The above list obviously does not cover all the activities of the President and Meets Secretary, whilst attending excursions to Lochnagar. Mention must be made of one occasion, when the route of an overhead line, ultimately to provide for a supply of electricity to the Muir of Inverey, was surveyed. This, interesting in itself, also threw much light on the nature of the country immediately to the west of Braemar, country over which the climber normally passes his eyes in raising them to judge the conditions on the hills.

The writer, reflecting on the derivation of the name Lochnagar, subscribes to its reference to goats. So far as he is concerned they still inhabit the place.

THE CLUB HUTS

ROBERT BAIN

MUIR Cottage, at Inverey, and Derry Lodge, in Glen Lui, were opened in 1950 and 1951 respectively, to provide accommodation of climbing hut standard within easy reach of the main Cairngorm and Upper Deeside summits. Since their opening many improvements have been made, and for the benefit of members who have not visited them and of members of other mountaineering clubs who may be interested, it has been felt desirable to give a short resume of the facilities at present provided.

MUIR OF INVEREY

Muir of Inverey is a single-storey stone building with wooden annexe situated at the west end of the wood a few hundred yards beyond Little Inverey, 6 miles from Braemar, on the north side of the road to Linn of Dee. It is a typical upper Deeside cottage, comprising a living-room, used as a kitchen and sitting-room, and three bedrooms, two in the annexe which is entered from within the cottage.

Each bedroom is equipped with two double-tier wooden beds with spring and flock mattresses and four blankets. Sheets or sleeping bags must be provided by residents. The total accommodation is twelve: one bedroom is normally reserved for ladies, and the acceptable number may therefore be reduced.

Cooking utensils, crockery and cutlery for twelve are provided. Cooking and lighting are by electricity, for which a slot meter is installed. An adequate supply of pennies and shillings should therefore be taken.

Spring water is laid on to a sink in the living-room and a limited amount of coal is provided for heating. There are ample supplies of waste timber in the near vicinity and residents are expected to replace any wood which they may burn and so maintain the stock. There is one external Elsan sanitation unit.

The local caretaker of Muir of Inverey is Mr McDougal, Bellaneye Cottage, Inverey, from whose wife supplies of tinned foods may frequently be obtainable. Fresh milk and eggs are often to be had in the vicinity, and Messrs Collie, general grocers, Braemar, deliver

by van on Fridays. No supplies of food are available in the hut, and none must be left after occupation.

Access to Muir of Inverey is often possible in winter when the road to Derry Lodge is blocked, and it then provides reasonable facilities for ski-ing, as well as convenient access to the Glen Ey hills and the An Sgarsoch and Glen Tilt groups.

DERRY LODGE

Derry Lodge, a twelve-roomed two-storey granite shooting lodge, is situated at the confluence of the Derry and Luibeg burns, at the commencement of the Lairig Ghru and Lairig an Laoigh paths and at the end of the private road which leaves the Linn of Dee to Mar Lodge road about half a mile east of the Linn.

A locked gate at the entrance to this road prevents unauthorised vehicular access: a wicket gate permits the passing of pedestrians and cyclists. A key for this gate is obtainable from Mrs Gordon, Victoria Bridge Lodge, Inverey, at a daily charge of 2s. 6d. The Huts Custodian issues a certificate, to be surrendered to Mrs Gordon, which, by arrangement with the Factor of the Fife Estates, permits the key to be retained over the period of residence at Derry Lodge for the single daily fee. During the stalking season keys are available only to intending residents at Derry Lodge and this certificate is necessary in order to obtain one. Members and guests intending to travel to Derry Lodge by private car should therefore advise the Huts Custodian to this effect. Keys are not normally available to anyone when the road is in a soft condition and liable to be damaged by traffic.

Walkers proceeding to Derry should cross the Dee by the timber bridge built by the Canadian Forestry Corps; vehicles gain little by taking this route, which is considerably rougher than the road by the Linn.

The plan accompanying this article shows the general lay-out of the lodge, but in certain instances the utilisation of the rooms has been modified since it was drawn.

The lower front rooms provide lounge (1) and dining-room (2) accommodation. Room (3) is at present not in use and (4) is equipped as a drying-room. The main kitchen (6) is provided with heating and cooking stoves and with rural-gas cookers. During the winter months, danger of freezing prohibits the use of the hot-water supply. Piped water is however available in winter in the scullery and ground-floor W.C., and in summer also in the fully equipped bathroom.

Eighteen beds with spring and other mattresses and four emergency camp beds with straw palliasses provide accommodation for twenty-two in the six bedrooms, which are allocated to individual parties by the Huts Custodian. Sheets or sleeping bags must be provided by residents. Lighting by rural gas is provided downstairs. In the bedrooms, paraffin lamps or candles are employed and residents are reminded of the danger of fire in an isolated building of this nature. No fires should be lighted in the bedrooms. Mr R. Scott who resides at Luibeg Cottage and who is authorised to supervise the lodge, may require residents to show their booking vouchers from the Huts Custodian. It should be noted that climbing boots are prohibited in most of the rooms and alternative footwear should be taken.

Cooking utensils, crockery and cutlery for eighteen are provided. In addition to rural-gas cooking facilities, a limited amount of coal and timber, which may have to be sawn, is available for cooking and heating. On no account should residents take timber of any description other than from the wood store without first obtaining the consent of Mr Scott.

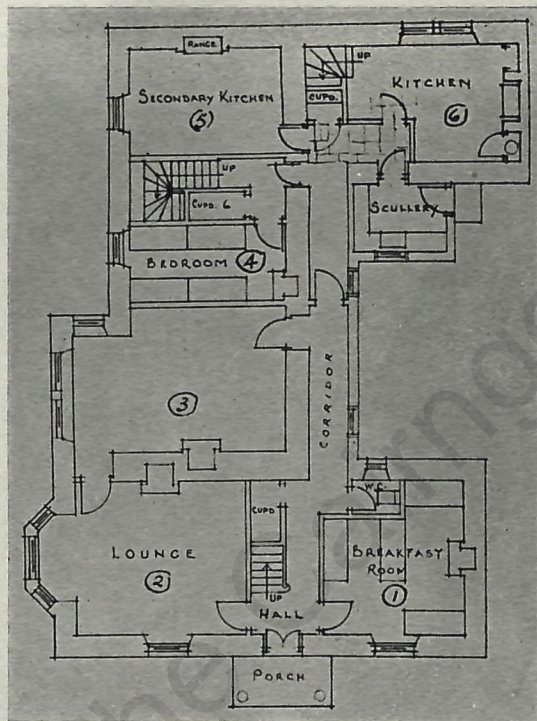
No supplies are available at Derry and none should be left there at the end of a visit. Braemar (10 miles) is the nearest source of supply and parties should provide their own food. Postal deliveries are intermittent, particularly in winter.

During the stalking season, when Derry Lodge is available only to members and personal guests, Mr Scott should be consulted regarding the routes to be taken, and his advice accepted in order to avoid disturbing stalkers.

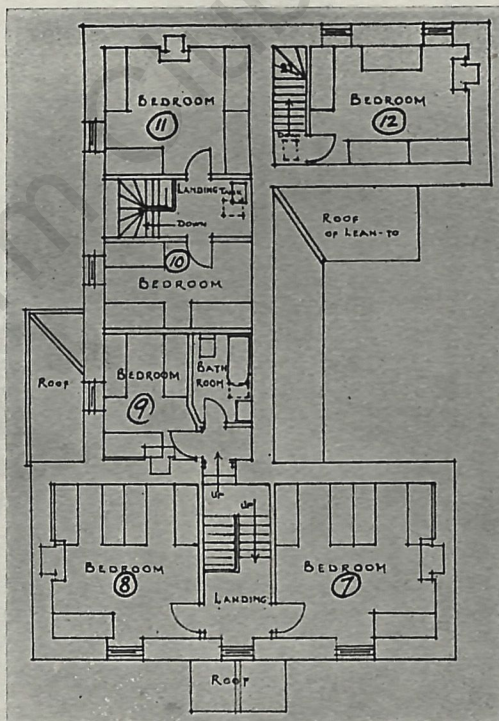
Mountain Rescue First Aid equipment is stored in the cupboard adjoining the drying-room. The key is available from Mr Scott.

BOOKING ARRANGEMENTS

Both huts are available to members of the Cairngorm Club and their guests and to members of approved clubs. Cairngorm Club members should apply direct to the Huts Custodian; members of other clubs should make bookings through their own club secretaries. As mentioned above, Derry Lodge is confined to Cairngorm Club members and guests during the stalking season: during July, August and September special exclusive booking arrangements may be in operation at Muir of Inverey. Charges are liable to revision; at present members and relatives under 16 pay 2s. 6d. per night; other guests and members of other clubs 4s. per night, at both huts, inclusive



GROUND FLOOR

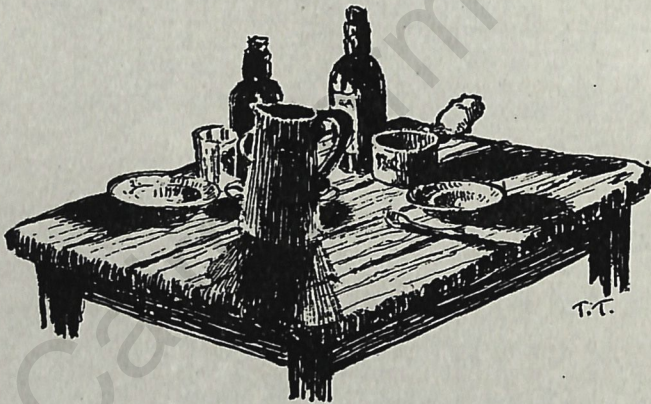


UPPER FLOORS

PLAN OF DERRY LODGE

of all charges except breakages. The Huts Custodian is Mr Robert Bain, Viewfield, Milltimber, Aberdeenshire (Tel. : Culter 3174), from whom alone keys are normally available. It is therefore essential to book in advance. Members are reminded that the hut facilities are available during the day for a fee of 1s. 6d. per person.

These huts provide facilities for climbers in an area where previously they were lacking and the Club is therefore particularly indebted to the Trustees of the Fife Estates for granting the leases of the huts, and to their Factor, Mr Munro, for his helpful co-operation at all times.



FOUR DAYS IN THE SOUTHERN ALPS

W. RAMSDEN

EARLY on January 16, 1950 a "Solent" flying-boat brought me safely down upon the smooth waters of Waitemata harbour, Auckland. The next day I flew south to Christchurch. In order to keep the weight of my luggage within the airliner's permitted free maximum of 30 kilograms, my climbing gear had been left at home. This deficiency was remedied to some extent by the purchase, in Christchurch, of a pullover, a windproof jacket, a hat, and a pair of boots. Most of the cost of these might have been saved had I known that all were available for hire at the Hermitage. The boots, the best available, were in fact heavy clodhoppers, not climbing boots. On Wednesday morning, the 18th, I left Christchurch by motor-coach for the Hermitage, the well-known climbers' hotel at the foot of Mount Cook, a little over 200 miles away by road.

For the first 90 miles we travelled across the Canterbury Plains. Our first stop was at Ashburton for lunch. Further stops were made at Geraldine, and at Fairlie where we had to change into a similar but older motor-coach. From Fairlie the road climbed to Burke's Pass, and then descended slightly to the MacKenzie Plains—so named after a certain Jock MacKenzie, a noted sheep rustler of bygone days. The plains were brown and dry, and covered by thick tussocks of long grass with, here and there, a few clumps of a viciously thorny, dark green shrub called Wild Irishman. We stopped for afternoon tea at a small hotel on Lake Tekapo, 3,550 feet above sea level. I walked alone down to the lake shore, threading my way through the tangle of sweet briar and Wild Irishman. Some black-billed gulls, objecting to my presence, rose from a small island a few yards off-shore and dived down at me. Twenty minutes was all too short a time to enjoy the supreme beauty of the lake and the surrounding hills, of the play of sunlight on the distant, jagged line of snow-clad peaks, and of the pure opalescent blue of the water. From Tekapo onwards every vehicle along the road could be traced by its streamer of dust, and whenever we slowed down our own dust stream promptly caught up with us and enveloped us. Another change of coach—into an even more elderly vehicle than the not-so-new one in which we had travelled from Fairlie—was made at Lake Pukaki, 30 miles

beyond Lake Tekapo. The works and buildings connected with a hydro-electric scheme, now under construction here, were an eyesore. A puncture delayed us for a few minutes between Pukaki and the Hermitage. Three or four diamond ducks disturbed from a nearby stream were, so it appeared, the only other living creatures in the valley. There was not a habitation in sight, no sign of cultivation, no bright flowers, no soft tinkle of cattle bells, only the limitless, brown tussock grass. The high mountains, still some little distance away, were magnificent, but to anyone accustomed to the bright and cheerful Alpine valleys of Switzerland this, the Tasman valley, was desolate indeed.

The Hermitage was reached just in time for dinner. It is a very comfortable hotel situated near the junction of the Hooker and Tasman valleys, about 2,500 feet above sea level. On the walls are numerous photographs and paintings of the mountains. Near the front door a notice informs guests in no uncertain terms that guideless climbing is forbidden, and even those taking short walks are asked to inform the office of their intentions. Another notice states that "Guides will be in attendance in the lounge between 8.0 P.M. and 9.0 P.M., and will be ready to give advice on all matters within their sphere." I arranged that a guide would be available for the following four days, to be shared with another guest, whom I had yet to meet. The charge for the services of a guide was 35s. per day, but for two persons sharing a guide the fee was reduced to 25s. per day. The guides are salaried employees of the New Zealand Government Tourist Department and the charges are collected by the department. It was suggested that we might go up to the Haast Hut, but no definite plans were made.

The next morning I was awake at 6 o'clock. Framed in my open window I could see Mount Cook, its summit brightly lit by the morning sunshine. There was not a cloud in the sky. I expected one of the guides to meet me either at breakfast or immediately after, to let me know what was being planned and when he wished me to be ready. However, no one came my way and the routine still remained a mystery to me. After a leisurely breakfast, enjoyed in the company of some members of an Australian bowling team, I went off in search of the equipment room. There I found Snowy Mace, assistant chief guide, who introduced me to my guide Jimmy Fosyth, and to Brian Fyfe who was to come with us. I hired an ice-axe and crampons, and we were soon on our way by bus. In the 13 miles from the Hermitage to the Ball Hut the road rises 1,300 feet; it is very rough



THE HERMITAGE

W. Ramsden



MALTE BRUN HUT

W. Ramsden

throughout, and in the last few miles where it follows the top of a large moraine there are several places that look decidedly unsafe.

Jimmy suggested that instead of going up to the Haast Hut we should go to the Malte Brun Hut and do a climb from there. Being completely ignorant of the local geography one hut was the same as another to me, and so I was willing enough to fall in with any suggestion. The Malte Brun Hut lies about 8 miles from the Ball Hut on the eastern side of the Tasman glacier. The walk down from the hut to the glacier through heaps of glacial detritus was a dusty business. Once on the glacier the going was easy, and there was no need to rope-up. Though my new rucksack was packed to bursting point, and heavier than anything I had been accustomed to carrying for a very long time, my load was quite microscopic compared to the immense packs that I later saw being carried around the mountains. The straps were troublesome, they were too weak and tended to bite into my shoulders. The Malte Brun Hut was being enlarged and reconstructed and a carpenter was hard at work on it when we arrived there at about 4 o'clock. As we found it, the hut was very small and cramped, with bunks for about twenty persons only. While work was in progress, Bert Barrie, the carpenter, insisted that everyone must sleep outside in the open, so that he and his assistant could sleep on undisturbed by climbers who rose and breakfasted during the small hours!

It might be as well now to consider the general topography of the district and to say something about the climate, the mountaineering, and the natural history. Sitting down amongst the tussocks of snow-grass outside the hut, and looking out across the Tasman glacier, one is faced by a great rampart of snow-clad mountains. On the left, between 6 and 7 miles away is Mount Cook (12,349 feet). and on the right, at roughly the same distance, Mount Elie de Beaumont (10,200 feet). Between these lie Mount Dampier (11,267 feet), Mount Tasman (11,475 feet) the second highest, Mount Lendenfeld (10,450 feet), Mount Haast (10,294 feet), Mount Haidinger (10,054 feet), Glacier Peak (10,107 feet), the Minarets (10,058), Douglas Peak (10,107 feet), and one or two lesser peaks. This is the highest section of the main divide which extends from Mount Rolleston near Arthur's Pass in the north to Mount Aspiring in the south—a distance of 170 miles as the crow flies. This great chain of mountains, much of which is less than 30 miles from the west coast, lies right in the path of the prevailing, moisture-laden westerly or north-westerly winds, which sweep in upon them from over hundreds of miles of ocean. The

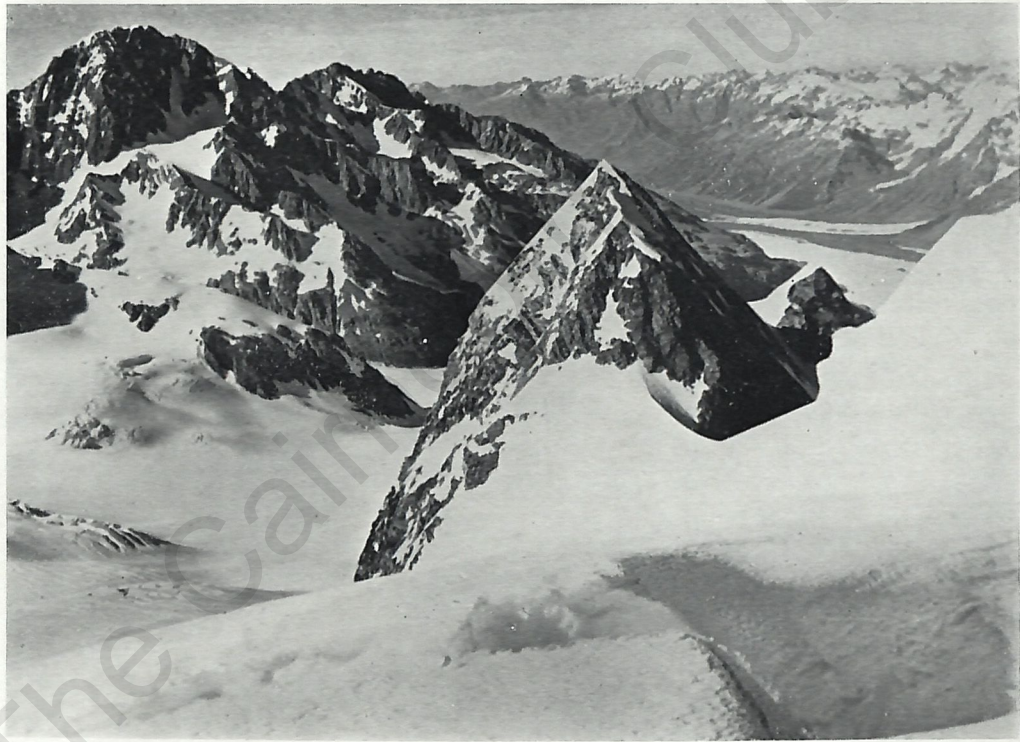
mountains are thereby deluged in snow, and although their latitude is some two degrees nearer the equator than that of the Swiss Alps, the snowline is about 3,000 feet lower. Stupendous ice-falls cascade down their flanks; one of the best-known of these, the Hochstetter icefall, which we saw on our way up the glacier, is over 3,000 feet in height. The Tasman glacier, which is 18 miles long and, in places, at least a mile wide, is the largest in New Zealand, and is, moreover, 5 miles longer than the Aletsch glacier, the longest in Switzerland. Most of the climbs hereabouts are over snow and ice, and for these crampons are in general use. The rock is a brittle and unreliable sandstone, and the only good rock climbing, so I was told, is on Malte Brun.

My introduction to the alpine flora of this region was on the grassy slopes about the Malte Brun Hut. Unlike the brightly coloured Alpine flowers of Europe those of New Zealand are mostly white, very pale mauve, or yellow; but white flowers are, I think, the most common. Even the gentians, one species of which, *Gentiana corymbifera*, was to be seen near the hut, are white. This sobriety of colour however in no way detracts from their charm and beauty. Most of the plants occur nowhere else in the world, and to anyone with even the scantiest knowledge of botany this whole district is a floral paradise. Few birds were to be seen; only a small pipit, very similar to the meadow pipit of British hills, and one or two black-backed gulls passing overhead. While Brian and I had been taking stock of our surroundings, Jim had been preparing supper—and a very good supper too, of ham and salad, stewed apricots, and tea. After we had finished we helped to wash up and to put the things away. In preparation for the night, mattresses and blankets had then to be taken from the hut and laid out on a more or less level piece of ground a few yards away. Jim told us that if the fine weather held he would be taking us up Mount Elie de Beaumont in the morning, and warned us of an early rise and a strenuous day ahead. Soon after 8 o'clock all three of us were in bed. I had six blankets over me, and was wearing all my clothes except my windproof jacket and boots! I did not intend to be frozen; in fact I was very snug and warm in my bed beneath the stars. Jim called us at 1.35 A.M. A truly magnificent breakfast awaited us—a plate of wheat-bix and stewed apricots with hot milk to go with them, followed by bacon and two eggs each, and bread and butter and jam, and of course—tea. We set out at 2.15 A.M. Jim had the only torch and by its rather uncertain light we plunged down through a tangle of tussock-grass,

scree and boulders, and then across a lateral moraine to the glacier. We trudged up the Tasman glacier for nearly 5 miles, unroped and with the crampons slung on our rucksacks. At ten past five we stopped to put on crampons and to rope-up—Jim in the lead, Brian middle-man, and myself at the end. By this time the tops of all the great peaks around us were bathed in brilliant sunlight, and standing out in all their dazzling whiteness against a deep blue sky. High up on the glacier a few crevasses were momentarily troublesome, but Jim never hesitated for more than a few seconds before finding a way across. At about 8,000 feet we came to an icefall. At its upper end a high wall of ice appeared at first glance to bar further progress. We traversed a short distance along the foot of the wall and then turned up a very narrow ribbon of ice that had broken away from the face of the main fall. At the top it was only a short step across from the detached ribbon to the upper glacier. It was rather a precarious journey along the crest of this narrow, lightly snow-covered, sliver of ice. It was about 9 inches wide with a vertical drop of 50 feet on the downhill side, and a crevasse on the other. At 7 o'clock, at approximately 8,500 feet, we stopped for a short rest and a drink of tea. Before we reached the 10,200 foot summit, steps had to be cut up a steep slope for about 200 feet, but other than this there were no other problems once the icefall had been passed. At one moment the summit seemed still a long way off, and then—quite suddenly—almost before we realised that we were there, we arrived on the top at 8.55 A.M. This was Brian's first experience of truly Alpine conditions; he was rather tired and had found some parts of the climb a little worrying. From the summit a grand prospect of mountains was spread before us. Mount Cook, Mount Tasman, and Malte Brun were the most prominent of the nearer peaks. To the west some low fluffy clouds hid much of the land but, through the gaps, I could see the coast. Nearer to us on the west side of the divide were the great *névés* that feed the Franz Josef and Fox glaciers. These two glaciers fall steeply in narrow defiles and move, for glaciers, at an astonishing speed—the Franz Josef attaining a speed of 15 feet a day. Both glaciers end at little more than 700 feet above sea level, and at their lower ends are enclosed by thick forest. To the south and south-east could be seen the MacKenzie Plains, and the hills and mountains around Lake Tekapo which I had passed two days previously. A cold north-east wind blowing across the summit did not encourage us to dally there for long, moreover Jim was anxious to get down to lower levels before the fierce sunshine made the snow

too soft and slushy. Indeed we soon noticed how rapidly the snow conditions were deteriorating. The descent of the steps was accomplished without difficulty. At the icefall Jim took over the lead from me and after some slight initial difficulty established himself on the top of the detached flake. Then Brian got on to it and passed ahead of Jim, and finally I stepped on to it and passed ahead of the other two, and then started the perilous-looking journey down. I finished the last yard or two by shuffling along astride, and Brian did most of it in that wet way. Having threaded our way through the crevasses without mishap we arrived at 11.5 A.M., at the point slightly below the Lendenfeld saddle where we had roped-up for the ascent. Here we removed our crampons and finished off our tea. I was very thirsty. The rope was kept on for another hour owing to the wretchedly soft snow. About a mile from the hut we had to walk through a patch of slushy ice which surged over the boot-tops. I spent some time taking photographs of the Alpine flowers growing on the steep slopes below the hut. The other two left me to this occupation and were back at the hut soon after 2 o'clock—about forty minutes before I arrived there. Four climbers who arrived at the hut during the late afternoon had come over from the Murchison Valley laden with tents, sleeping bags, food and other equipment in the true New Zealand manner.

Our plans for the remaining two days were to go the Haast Hut in the morning, stay there the night, and climb up to the Glacier Dome—a noted viewpoint—before returning to the Hermitage. Soon after supper we settled down once again into our beds on the open mountainside. No lights and no moon dimmed the brilliance of the stars, and the silence of the night was broken only by the rumble of distance icefalls. Brian and I did not stir from our beds until nearly 8 o'clock in the morning, by which time the other climbers had long since left. The sun was shining in an almost cloudless sky. After breakfast there was work to be done—washing-up to be finished, and bedding to be brought in from outside, folded up, and stowed away. By 10 o'clock we were ready to leave. After walking down the glacier until almost level with the Hochstetter icefall we climbed a well-marked ridge on the north side of the icefall. The lower part of this ridge—the Haast Ridge—was covered mainly by tussock grass, and amongst the grass and on the rocks were many Alpine plants that I had not seen before. Foremost among these was the silvery cotton plant—*Celmisia coriacea*—considered by New Zealanders, and not without justification, to be the finest daisy in the world. The world's finest buttercup—*Ranunculus lyallii*—was also growing there, but I



MALTE BRUN AND TASMAN GLACIER FROM MONT ELIE DE BEAUMONT

W. Ramsden

saw no flowers, only a few of the large leathery leaves. The South Island edelweiss, eyebrights, forget-me-nots, ourisias, and many other flowers occurred there, and also the quaint "Spaniards" with long, stiff, spiny leaves, from the middle of which arises a massive, poker-like flowering spike 4 feet or more in length. On the upper part of the ridge we had some easy rock scrambling, and several patches of loose scree to cross. I did not envy the guides their job of carrying up supplies by this, the only, route to the Haast Hut. The huts are provisioned by the guides in the spring, before the climbing season begins and after the winter sports season has ended, 40 lb. or more of supplies being carried up on each journey. Well up on the ridge is a large projecting crag, with a knife-edge crest and a formidable drop below it. This is called Turner's Rock. Turner, one of the pioneers of climbing in the New Zealand mountains, is reputed to have stood on this particular rock and to have balanced an ice-axe on his nose while doing so! The Haast, or King Memorial, Hut is quite small but solid and well built—built, in fact, by Bert Barrie. There are bunks for twelve persons. At 4 o'clock, after we had been at the hut for about twenty minutes, clouds began to blow up from the south-east. Many of the higher peaks were soon cloud-capped and I was glad to put on some extra clothing. We were the only occupants of the hut that night. Soon after daybreak next morning, when I first opened the hut door and looked out, some clouds were drifting about the mountain tops, and more were gathered down in the valley, but there was as yet no sign of rain. At 8 o'clock we started out for the Glacier Dome. This was a very simple climb of a little over 2,000 feet, nearly all of it on snow. After walking up some broken crags immediately behind the hut we roped-up on the snowfield above them. The snow was very soft and inclined to slide off on the steeper slopes. Fortunately, perhaps, there was not much sunshine. The top of the Dome—8,047 feet—was reached at 9.25 A.M. Clouds now almost completely filled the Tasman valley, hiding most of it below 5,000 feet. The high tops however were clear. The view of Mount Cook and Mount Tasman was superb, both being comparatively close at hand. Our return to the hut was accelerated by two short sitting glissades. There was rough going all the way down the Haast Ridge, right down to the heaps of glacial wreckage at the bottom. Having taken little vigorous exercise for several months I was by now beginning to feel the effects of the past three strenuous days, and finding it difficult to keep up with my much younger companions. We were at the Ball Hut by 2.40 P.M., in good time for the tourist

bus. On our approach several keas flew up from a rocky outcrop near the hut. These birds are large grey-green parrots with murderous-looking beaks, and a scarlet patch under the wings which becomes conspicuous when they fly. They have a reputation for mischief. Any boots or cooking utensils left lying about are liable to disappear if keas are around! Shortly before we left a scud of rain blew across the valley. This brief shower was all I was destined to see of what is reputedly the worst weather in the world.

I decided before leaving home to make no plans and to leave everything "in the lap of the gods." Now that this journey is ended I can surely say that the gods were bountiful with their favours, and that during my short stay in the Southern Alps they gave me all, and more, than I could possibly have hoped for.

IN MEMORIAM

IT is with deepest regret that we record the deaths of the following members and past-members:—

Dr George Hendry	.	.	.	1920 to 1952.
Dr J. Leith Hendry	.	.	.	1927 ,, 1953.
Mr Arthur J. McIntosh	.	.	.	1946 ,, 1953.
Mr R. P. Masson	.	.	.	1919 ,, 1953.
Mr R. M. Murdoch	.	.	.	1925 ,, 1953.
Mr James B. Nicol	.	.	.	1917 ,, 1953.
Mr William Stewart	.	.	.	1925 ,, 1953.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1953

THE 65th Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Caledonian Hotel, Aberdeen, on November 18, 1953, Mr E. W. Smith, President, in the Chair. Only twenty-five members and five junior members attended: less than 10 per cent. of the membership. The Hon. Treasurer presented the accounts for the year ending October 31, 1953, already circulated to members, and these were approved. Thereafter the various office-bearers gave an account of the year's activities of the Club.

Office-bearers were appointed as follows: *Hon. President*, Dr R. M. Williamson; *President*, Mr E. W. Smith; *Vice-Presidents*, Mr A. L. Hay and Mr R. Bain; *Hon. Secretary and Treasurer*, Mr J. E. Bothwell; *Hon. Editor and Librarian*, Dr R. L. Mitchell; *Hon. Meets Secretary*, Mr L. B. Perkins; and *Hon. Huts Custodian*, Mr R. Bain. The following were elected to the Committee: Miss A. A. Adams, Miss S. Alexander, Messrs W. M. Duff, N. F. Dyer, W. A. Ewen, Dr G. Mathieson, Mr A. Mutch, Col. E. B. Reid and Dr A. M. Thomson.

There was some discussion regarding the venue of future New Year and Easter Meets, and a proposal that, if possible, hut or similar accommodation should be available in addition to hotels was adopted.

The Hon. Secretary was instructed to communicate to Dr G. A. Taylor and Mr W. A. Ewen the appreciation of the Club for the services which they had rendered towards Club Huts and the *Journal* respectively.

The President read the messages which had been exchanged between the Club and Col. John Hunt at Katmandu following his successful leadership of the Everest expedition.

ANNUAL DINNER 1953

At the Annual Dinner in the Caledonian Hotel, Aberdeen, on November 28, 1953, the Club were fortunate in having as principal guest, Mr Tom Weir, who, in his own inimitable way, took the party into the Highlands of Scotland. As usual, the lecture room accommodation was filled to capacity. Some 120 members and guests at dinner thereafter heard the President, as is the established custom, propose the toast of the Club and Mr A. L. Hay that of the guests, the latter being ably represented by Miss E. B. Burt of the Ladies' Scottish Climbing Club.

INDOOR MEETS

Indoor Meets were held in the Victoria Restaurant on January 20, February 19, and March 17, 1954. An exhibition of cine films by Mr F. W. Morgan, a description of the 1953 Baird Expedition to Baffin Island by Mr Adam Watson, and a Members' Night provided good entertainment.

On October 22, 1953, the Club were associated with the Royal Scottish Geographical Society in sponsoring a lecture on "The Ascent of Everest" by Major C. G. Wylie and Mr T. D. Bourdillon to a packed audience in the Music Hall.

MEETS AND EXCURSIONS

1953

Sept. 6. Lochnagar.	Nov. 15. Ben Rinnes.
Oct. 18. Glen Muick to Glen Clova.	Dec. 6. Mount Battock, Clachnaben.

1954

New Year. Derry Lodge.	Mar. 21. Glen Clova.
Jan. 24. Lochnagar.	Easter. Ullapool.
Feb. 7. Glen Clunie.	June 6. Derry Lodge.
Feb. 21. Lochnagar <i>via</i> Ballochbuie.	June 19. } Speyside to Derry.
Mar. 7. Beinn a' Bhùird.	„ 20. }

The excursions planned for early 1954 were less successful than they might have been, largely on account of unkind weather, and memories of these excursions tend to be concentrated on the members of the parties and their behaviour. At the Glen Clunie excursion, for example, the skiers debussed at Glen Clunie Lodge; rebussed; debussed at Sheann Spittal; didn't like it there, and went back to Glen Clunie Lodge. Disgusted by this, the President and three members of the Committee went away and did an unroped ascent of the Devil's Elbow. Five members returned late on this day, hard going in soft snow and wind having delayed them. The hotel, who estimated that eighteen members would require sausages for tea, as opposed to fish, found that twenty-three wanted sausages, but it is uncertain whether this contretemps was due to the skiers still being difficult.

The Meets Secretary was upset a fortnight later by everybody being back at the bus one and three-quarter hours early, due again to soft snow and wind. On March 7, nobody got to the summit of Beinn a' Bhùird, not even to the South Top, due to soft snow again.

The excursion to Glen Clova on March 21 started in good weather and a new route was followed by the bus. Weather deteriorated and most parties were back wet and early. The generally unpleasant weather conditions experienced in the excursions mentioned seem to have cooled our members' ardour, for the two excursions planned for April and May had to be cancelled due to insufficient support. On the other hand, the excursion to Derry on June 6, leaving Aberdeen in mist, arrived to see the skies clearing and a cloudless but not too hot day resulted, enjoyed to the full by all.

The weather for the Spey-Dee midsummer overnight excursion was back to normal, and it is difficult to know why one member of the party considered it a night worth prolonging unduly. The reception arrangements at Derry Lodge were greatly appreciated by the wet and hungry multitude, and the thanks of the Club are due to those who, so they claim, gave up a wonderful excursion for their benefit.

The reluctance of the upper Deeside hotel proprietors to open over the New Year period resulted in the first peace-time New Year without a hotel meet for many years, although a number of members from the south gathered at a very successful private meet at Craigendarroch Hotel, Ballater. The official New Year Meet was held at Derry Lodge.



MONT BLANC AND THE BREITHORN FROM MONTE ROSA

W. Ramsden

The popularity of hotel meets was emphasised by over forty members and guests going to Ullapool at Easter, where the Royal Hotel proved an excellent centre. Conditions were generally good, and most of the tops in the area, from Suilven in the north to An Teallach and the Fannichs in the south, were covered.

FARTHER AFIELD

A FEW accounts of what members did in the Alps during the 1953 season have been received. Others were abroad but have sent no information: it is hoped that this may be remedied in future years.

In July, Malcolm Smith, with G. R. Greig and C. Petrie in the Cogne area of the Graians, started with the Gran Sertz and Punta Nera-Punta Bianca from the Sella Hut and then traversed Mont Herbetet from the Herbetet Chalets. From the Bivacco Antoldi in the Valeille glen the party climbed the Tour du Grand St Pierre and crossed the Colle di Valletta, taking the Punta Tsissetta on the way. Finally the Punta Tersiva was climbed from the Grauzon Chalets.

T. W. Patey and J. M. Taylor had ten days at Chamonix in July and had a good season. Their opening climb, the Ryan-Lochmatter route on the east face of the Blaitiere, was acclaimed by a thunderstorm on the descent. After the north-north-east ridge of the Aiguille de l'M, fourteen hours were spent on the Republique Arête of the Grands Charmoz. Then from Charpoua they traversed the Verte by the Arête Sans Nom, descending the Whympier couloir (cf. *A.J.*, 59, 342). To round off, the Cardinal was climbed in moonlight.

Hamish and Millicent McArthur and Margaret Munro explored the Maritime Alps and the ranges northwards, from Nice to Chamonix. Mont Clapier, the first 3,000 metre peak north of the Mediterranean, and a few passes, led to Monte Viso, so well known as a feature of the southward view from the Valais. Then into France where, from Bonneval, after an ascent of the Aiguille Rouge, the glacier pass from Val d'Isere to Valsavaranche was crossed to Aosta. From Courmayeur, the Dent de Géant was climbed and thereafter the party went by the Col de Géant to the Requin and climbed the Aiguille du Plan. The final ascent was the Grepon by a variation of the C.P. route.

The Editor had three days climbing from the Weissmeis Hut in August with Toni and Margrit Biner. Following the short but exposed south-east face of the Jägihorn to initiate Margrit, the Fletschhorn and Laquinhorn were traversed. The third day was spent on the delightful Jägigrat with the south-east wall approach. Toni was a hard taskmaster and kept the party of three well to the head of the line of two-man ropes.

OFF THE ROPE

Two good friends of the Club have retired during the past year, and all will wish them a long and well-deserved retirement.

Mr John Robertson, stalker at Spittal of Muick, must be a familiar figure to almost all members. He has seen the development of Lochnagar climbing since before the Symmers-Ewen days and many first ascents have had their origin in John Robertson's barn. He has ever maintained cordial relations with climbers,

although sometimes unable to grant all the facilities he himself would have liked to provide. His services were always available for search and rescue, and on such occasions Mrs Robertson gladly provided any shelter and refreshment which was required. Fortunately they have not left the glen and we hope to hear their hearty greeting on many future outings.

Constable Alexander Florence, who retired in May 1954, has for a number of years kept the peace in Braemar. Unobtrusively efficient, his direct relations with climbers were normally confined to the fortunately infrequent rescue operations, when his co-operation with the Mountain Rescue services has been a model of what such should be. Some members will remember him as a keen hill walker before he was posted to Braemar. We wish him every success in his new venture in Culter.

MOUNTAIN SHELTER IN COIRE ETCHACHAN

WITH the kind permission of the Trustees of the late Duke of Fife a Mountain Shelter has been built in Coire Etchachan, about one mile below Loch Etchachan and 5 miles from Derry Lodge, at a height of about 2,500 feet. Funds subscribed by friends of the late Dr A. G. Hutchison of Aberdeen, who was killed in a cliff accident in Pembrokeshire in 1949, made its erection possible. The construction was carried out by W. J. Brown, builder, of Aberdeen, with assistance in transport of materials, etc., from members of local climbing clubs and others.

The shelter is open throughout the year except during the stalking season from mid-August to mid-October. It measures 12 feet by 9 feet internally, and is 7 feet high to the eaves. Walls are of local boulders and concrete, and the pitched roof is of timber and aluminium sheet. Fittings include a cooking bench, clothes rails, and a seat. There is no fireplace. It is hoped that misuse, such as damage to the fabric, failure to dispose of litter or tins, and similar nuisances will not necessitate the imposition of restrictions.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

THE Nature Conservancy were established by Royal Charter in 1949 and have statutory powers under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949. In England they are answerable to the Lord President of the Council, in Scotland to the Secretary of State. They have three functions: to give advice, to do research, and to establish and manage nature reserves. The Chairman of the Nature Conservancy is Mr A. B. Duncan of Tynron, Dumfriesshire, and the Director General, Mr E. M. Nicholson. The Headquarters are at 19 Belgrave Square, London, S.W.1. In Scotland the Conservancy's affairs are in the hands of a Scottish Committee whose chairman is Professor J. R. Matthews, Regius Professor of Botany, University of Aberdeen. The Director of the Conservancy in Scotland is Dr John Berry. The Conservancy's three Nature Reserves in Scotland other than the Cairngorms are at Beinn Eighe, Wester Ross (10,450 acres), declared November 22, 1951; Morton Loch, Fife (47 acres), declared May 19, 1952; and Tentsmuir Point, Fife (92 acres), declared March 9, 1954.

THE CAIRNGORMS NATURE RESERVE CONSULTATIVE PANEL

THE following are members of the Cairngorms Consultative Panel set up by the Nature Conservancy to consider matters affecting public interests:—

Inverness County Council.
Aberdeen County Council.
Association of Scottish Climbing Clubs.
Scottish Mountaineering Club.
Cairngorm Club.
Moray Mountaineering Club.
Grampian Club.
Etchachan Club.
Scottish Ski Club.
Scottish Tourist Board.
Mountain Rescue Committee.
Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland.
Scottish Youth Hostels Association.
Scottish Council for Physical Recreation.
Scottish Council for National Parks.
Scottish Rights of Way Society.
Camping Club of Great Britain and Ireland (including British Caravanners' Club, Scottish Canoe Association, Scottish Caravan Club, and Woodcraft Folk, Scottish Section).

THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND

THE National Trust for Scotland has just published at 2s. 6d. a booklet describing the Trust's property in the Kintail, Balmacara and Falls of Glomach area. The main text is by George Scott Moncreiff, with an introduction to the mountains by Tom Weir.

Membership of the Trust, which is open to all for an annual subscription of 10s., gives free access to all properties and to corresponding National Trust properties in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Other booklets, obtainable from 5 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, 2, likely to be of interest to our members include those on Crathes Castle (2s.) Glencoe and Dalness (1s.), Glenfinnan (1s.), and Inverewe (2s.).

NEW CLIMBS

BEINN A' BHUIRD: GARBH CHOIRE

Squareface Buttress.—330 feet (V.D.). T. W. Patey and J. M. Taylor, July 1953. On the west wall (hidden from below) of the prominent crag high up between the Sneck and the Mitre Ridge. This wall, apparently a steep, holdless slab, is in fact remarkably rough with many small holds, and provides a delightful climb which has been repeated at least twice. From foot of Back Bay Gully on right of buttress, climb 110 feet to large platform, then 30 feet up crest to stance below overhang. Move horizontally 30 feet to right on small holds, beyond first obvious groove, until possible to move up and back to left to platform on crest (90 feet). Now steeply up to right to short horizontal crack (awkward move) with running belay, then 6 feet to fissure, climbed for 12 feet by jamming, shelf to right and delicate upward traverse to top.

Mitre Ridge (cf. S.M.C. "Cairngorms Guide," p. 243). W. D. Brooker and T. W. Patey, April 2, 1953. First ascent in winter conditions. Four and a half hours. Climb plastered with snow, with some ice. Initial slab passed on right. First chimney, heavily iced, turned by wide crack on right, with return traverse. First wall (10 feet) on crest required combined tactics. At first tower the party crossed slab to left and climbed 20 foot open chimney (crux). Pitch to neck behind tower less difficult but longer. A 30 foot traverse of a slab led to ascent of second tower, followed by impressive snow-mantled arête to the summit.

Mitre Ridge: East Wall.—500 feet (at least Severe). T. W. Patey and A. G. Nicol, March 31, 1954. On the left of the east face of Mitre Ridge an obvious 500 foot shallow gully (South-east Gully) leads straight up to the finish of the ridge. The route follows this gully for 200 feet, then graduates right to join the ordinary route at the top of the second tower (start of level section of ridge). A fine winter route, under any conditions at least severe, but possibly not good climbing in summer. Initial 80 foot pitch on snow ice, then easier slopes to second pitch. A sudden thaw at this point forced the party to leave the gully for a direct ascent of the right wall. To right over indefinite ground to foot of ice couloir. (A chimney to col between first and second towers looked too hard and was passed.) The couloir gave 60 feet of severe ice to a belay just beyond an awkward tilt. Twenty feet higher a break in the right wall led to an exposed nose. Beyond this a 12 foot descent revealed a wide 20 foot chimney, not iced but severe. Above, broken ground to top of second tower and ordinary route. Three hours.

Back Bay Gully (cf. C.C.J., 16, 288). T. W. Patey, J. M. Taylor, G. B. Leslie and A. G. Nicol, March 31, 1954. First ascent in winter conditions. Forty-five minutes. No pitches but steepening to 70° below the cornice. Exit on the left.

BEINN A' BHUIRD: COIRE NA CICHE

The Trident.—300 feet (V.D.). A. Thom and Miss E. Gordon; F. Malcolm and Miss S. Anderson, June 28, 1953. On the most southern end of the cliffs; cairn. Climb rib set against wall to sloping platform tapering to right, to wall

(8 feet, crux) climbed with piton safeguard by combined tactics in stocking soles. A slab is now climbed for 20 feet, then left traverse to flake belay. Directly up from belay, using pressure holds, to vertical wall: traverse to right to 30 feet slab of easy angle then 75 feet over tumbled blocks.

This climb has been repeated in nails, without combined tactics—still V.D.

BEINN A' BHUIRD: COIRE AN DUBH LOCHAIN

Polypody Groove (cf. S.M.C. "Cairngorms Guide," p. 240). J. Hay, March 28, 1954. First ascent in winter conditions. Three and a half hours. Lower portion filled with old hard snow. Above the ledge the route followed a series of snow-covered ledges to an ice pitch (30 feet) leading to a snow patch on the left of the summer route. The top 100 feet of May Day route was not climbed because of a thick covering of brittle ice, an exit being made on snow to the left of the cornice. Excellent snow conditions.

Tarsier Variation: May Day Route (cf. S.M.C. "Cairngorms Guide," p. 240). 270 feet (D.). J. Hay and A. Paterson, May 23, 1954. Start along a narrow depression on the crest of May Day rib, to the left of which the original route runs. In 150 feet, a small belay at the foot of the slanting shelf on the right wall of the rib is reached. The next portion on the wall requires a run out of 120 feet, the shelf being followed to a short slab, tackled on the right, and thence along to a 10 foot chimney. The climb finishes on the easier upper buttress. Fresh snow covered many of the holds on the first ascent.

BRAERIACH: GARBH CHOIRE MOR

She-Devil's Buttress.—400 feet (V.D.). K. Winram and M. Smith, May 24, 1953. This buttress forms the right retaining wall of Great Gully. Start at foot of long tail of slab-ribs forming low wall. Easy but delightful for 150 feet to steep main section at spearhead of rock set under the lower of two vicious-looking high-angled slabs. At the top of spearhead climb left-hand crack on lower slab till it peters out on the smooth face over Great Gully. A delicate long stride to left followed by an upward move to easier rock leads to a crack between the two slabs. This crack leads to a magnificent eyrie with table top block belay. The wall behind is vertical and very difficult. At first good footholds, but sketchy handholds. Trend to left into a groove where difficulties ease, with belay in 30 feet. Then to open corner on left, over Great Gully, and wet slab back to crest and easy rock.

Egyptian Fantasy.—350 feet (D.). K. Winram and C. Petrie; G. R. Greig and M. Smith, June 14, 1953. Sphinx is bounded on left by a narrow gully climbed by A. Tewnton in 1940. To left of this gully is a tapering buttress divided by a huge slabby right-angled recess. The left side is composed of ribs and shallow grooves. The route lies on a sheet of slab on the right, with a curving crest. Start slightly to right of recess, straight up for 40 feet, then right traverse and exposed upward move to crest over gully. Easy to platform of piled blocks below vertical wall at head of recess. Choice of routes to top of wall. Either a severe exposed move out to left with long stride followed by crack, or little chimney on gully wall. Then steep moderate rib for 80 feet to plateau.

BRAERIACH: COIRE BROCHAIN

Azalea Rib.—250 feet (D.). K. Winram, C. Petrie and M. Smith, June 28, 1953. Small buttress forming left wall of West Gully. Route follows line of least resistance, up lowest rocks to right on smooth slabs to platform and belay. Then left traverse and high step to shelf on right side of buttress, narrowing to difficult mossy corner. Double back up grassy gully to nick in ridge, then on slabs on left of buttress to final very steep wall. Short descent to left and narrow chokestone chimney.

LOCHNAGAR

Black Spout Pinnacle, Route II.—(H.S.). T. W. Patey and J. M. Taylor, February 28, 1953. Not a winter ascent. From extreme left end of large grassy expanse above entrance to the Left-hand Branch a long narrow chimney provides a 100 foot pitch to short ridge on the upper cliff (cf. *S.M.C.J.*, 23, 32). Descent of 20 feet on other side at top of long crack leading 300 feet down to the Springboard. Traverse 50 feet to steep groove, severe exposure with running belay, over a steep smooth slab with barely adequate holds on wall above, with some ice on the holds. Stocking soles. An ascent of 20 feet in the groove led to a good platform from which Route I was joined in 60 feet and which marked the end of serious difficulties.

Eagle Ridge. T. W. Patey and T. D. Bourdillon (A.C.), December 5, 1953. Second direct winter ascent, in difficult conditions with heavy powder snow (cf. *C.C.J.*, 16, 281).

Shadow Chimney (cf. *C.C.J.*, 16, 281). F. Malcolm and D. Ritchie, November 22, 1952. First ascent under winter conditions. Seven hours.

The winter ascent of the Stack, described elsewhere in this number, was made on November 29, 1952, by J. M. Taylor, G. B. Leslie and T. L. Fallowfield. A description of the first ascent will be found in the preceding number (*C.C.J.*, 16, 285).

CREAG AN DUBH LOCH

Bower Buttress.—350 feet (V.D.). L. Lovat and T. W. Patey; W. D. Brooker and C. D. Thomson, April 17, 1954. Route on upper cliffs lies on face which forms left wall of the Hanging Garden. It follows the left of two lines of weakness and is close to the prominent edge of this wall. After a succession of short pitches, at mid height the left end of a lofty terrace paved with granite rock plaques is reached. Along this and right up a short wall to a grassy ledge. Hidden chimney leads to easier ground and choice of routes. Adequate belays and fine situations, but somewhat vegetated.

CAENLOCHAN GLEN: CRAIG HERRICH

Photogenic Rib.—600 feet (D.). A. G. N. Flew and G. McAndrew, May 18, 1952. Half climbing, half scrambling, rather artificial. Start 45 feet right of original route (*S.M.C.* "Cairngorms Guide," p. 63), up slabs to grassy rake

sloping to left. Traverse along ledge to right to arête which names climb. From upper end, scrambling and two further selected arêtes lead to original route. This route proved rather lengthy for a club excursion.

MAOILE LUNNDAIDH, MONAR: CREAG TOLL A' CHOIN

Mica Ridge.—300 feet (D.) Adam Watson and A. Watson, sen., May 15, 1954. From floor of corrie a steep continuous cliff with much vegetation is on left. The climb is first definite ridge to right of this wall. Snow led to lowest rocks, then upward traverse over grassy ledges to vertical wall and lone groove leading to exposed corner on right. Left up short wall, along crest, up groove and wall to knife-edge. A snow comb and 12 foot cornice completed the climb. Good belays on clean mica schist on steeper sections.

Adam Watson reports on the possibilities of further climbs in the Strathfarrar area as follows: Most of the cliffs were examined with binoculars. Nearly all are broken and there is much vegetation. The "almost unbroken precipitous face" of Sgurr na Muice (S.M.C. "Western Highlands Guide," p. 105) is of this nature. The face of Sgurr na Fearstaig, farther north, appeared steeper and cleaner. On the cliffs of Toll a' Choin there are probably no faces really free of vegetation.

There would appear to be some confusion regarding the naming of Maoile Lunndaidh. On O.S. sheet 36 and in the "Western Highlands Guide" the mountain is so named, Toll a' Choin being the eastern corrie; but in Munro's Tables, Creag Toll a' Choin is the mountain with Maoile Lunndaidh one of its tops.

* * *

The name, She-Devil's Buttress, was suggested, reports Mr Malcolm Smith, by Richard Parry's reference to the Garbh Coire of Braeriach as the Hollow of the She-Devil ("In the High Grampians," p. 123). This in its turn was presumably inspired by Pit an Deamhain (*vide* Seton Gordon, "The Cairngorm Hills of Scotland," p. 70).

* * *

Mr A. G. Duthie draws attention to the translation which he gives for Beinn Nuis, namely The Hill of the Fawns, which differs greatly from The Face Mountain, the rendering given in the S.M.C. Islands Guide. Mr Duthie's authority is local usage, based on information obtained in Arran.

NEW CLIMBING BOOKS

- “ The Victorian Mountaineers,” by Ronald Clark. (Batsford, 1953, 18s.)
- “ Mountains of the Midnight Sun,” by Showell Styles. (Hurst and Blackett, 1954, 18s.)
- “ Tibetan Journey,” by George N. Patterson. (Faber, 1954, 15s.)
- “ The Northern Highlands.” (S.M.C. Guide, 1953, 15s.)
- “ Munro’s Tables.” (S.M.C. Guide, 1953, 7s. 6d.)
- “ Rock Climbs at Arrochar.” (S.M.C. Guide, 1954, 3s. 6d.)
- “ Climbers’ Guide to Ben Nevis.” (S.M.C. Guide, 1954, 7s. 6d.)
- “ John Sikander,” by Donald C. Eyre. (Robert Hale, 1954, 10s. 6d.)

“ The Victorian Mountaineers ” were the men and women who, in Britain and the Alps, pointed the way to the pursuit of mountaineering as we know it to-day. Fortunately many of them were authors and we can go to original sources for much of the detail of the developments so well summarised by Ronald Clark in this book. The background to the climbers is well sketched in and the assessment of character clarifies many otherwise inexplicable incidents described elsewhere. The pictures throughout are good, but we may be biased, as the majority of those portrayed belonged to the Cairngorm Club—one of our early mass Meets being illustrated!

“ Mountains of the Midnight Sun ” is an account of a small expedition in 1952 to the unexplored and unclimbed mountains in the northern part of Lyngen peninsula in the extreme north of Norway. Despite the divided interests of geology and glaciology, and weather which makes the choice of title barely justifiable, a few 4,000 foot summits of considerable climbing interest were reached and a considerable amount of exploration and mapping carried out. The value of the book lies in its disclosure of the existence of still unclimbed mountains of moderate difficulty in a relatively easily accessible region, and of the measures required to get an expedition there. The author had a further party in the same area in 1953 and fewer of the tops around the Valley of Trolds are still virgin: it is to be hoped that an account of this will supplement the knowledge of Lyngen gained from this most readable book.

“ Tibetan Journey ” is an account of a trip across the south-eastern corner of Tibet, from China to Assam and India, or is it Pakistan? It is interesting to read this with the first part of Harrer’s “ Seven Years in Tibet ” in mind and to compare the attitude of climber and non-climber to the difficulties of travel in the Himalayan foothills. Harrer had no facilities; he had to live by his wits: George Patterson, son of a Scottish miner, had all the help official sponsorship could produce and an adequate native escort, yet his journey was by no means easy. One nevertheless gets an impression of over-statement on occasion, such as the assumed inevitability of death resulting from a bivouac on a snow pass. The book, however, gives an excellent description of life in this part of Tibet.

“ The Northern Highlands ” was published in good time for the 1954 Easter Meet at Ullapool. All who compared it in use with the earlier edition were in

no doubt as to the improvement in the current version. There has been in recent years a considerable increase in climbing activity in this area, and a search through a pile of journals is no longer required to find out what still has to be done. For the hill walker, mention of such names as Beinn Eighe, An Teallach, Suilven, and Ben Hope are sufficient to indicate the attractive nature of the country covered in an adequate fashion by this guide.

“Munro's Tables and Other Tables of Lesser Heights” reprints the 3,000 foot tables from the General guide and includes also lists of the 2,500 foot summits with a 500 foot drop, and all the 2,000 foot hills in the lowlands. The original Munro's Tables are too well known to need comment, other than an expression of gratification that the chance of “improving” them has not been taken. At first reading it seems strange that the 2,500 foot summits are not more numerous and that the majority of them are on the periphery of the main mountain masses rather than within them, but on consideration the explanation becomes apparent.

“Rock Climbs at Arrochar” is a pocket size sixty-four page volume in flexible covers, by B. H. Humble and J. B. Nimlin in collaboration with the Creagh Dhu Mountaineering Club. The occurrence of good climbing rock on the Cobbler and other Arrochar hills has led to these becoming the training ground for Glasgow climbers and it is to them that the appeal of this guide will be greatest. Some ninety routes of all grades of difficulty are classified and described concisely.

“Climbers' Guide to Ben Nevis” resembles in format and approach the earlier Glencoe rock-climbing guide. Dr G. G. Macphee acknowledges his debt to the late B. P. Kellet and J. H. B. Bell in the compilation of the descriptions of the climbs. The series of clear diagrammatic sketches and plans is a useful feature, particularly as, for ease of consultation, they are collected at the back of the volume.

R. L. M.

“John Sikander” is a very uneven novel, both in its subject matter and in its treatment. It oscillates uneasily between a psychological study of character and a pure adventure story. When the author forgets the troubles of his rather tiresome neurotic hero, he writes interestingly and absorbingly. Perhaps one should not cavil too much over inaccuracies about the frontiers of Pakistan and India, but it is irritating when the scene of a hazardous rock climb is always afterwards described as an ice cliff. The ending is disappointing and inconclusive—for not only has the reason for the adventure become too thin to be credible, but the author and his characters seem to have lost all faith in it too. The reader can hardly be expected to do what the author cannot, and the last emotion likely to be left by the book is a feeling of exasperation.

M. McA.

CLIMBING JOURNALS

- Alpine Journal*, Nos. 286-288.
Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal, Nos. 144, 145.
Climbers Club Journal, Nos. 78, 79.
Rucksack Club Journal, Nos. 46, 47.
Midland Association of Mountaineers Journal, Vol. III, No. 4.
Fell and Rock Climbing Club Journal, No. 47.
Cambridge Mountaineering, 1954.
Oxford Mountaineering, 1954.
Ladies' Alpine Club Year Book, 1953, 1954.
American Alpine Journal, 1953.
Iowa Climber, 1953.
Appalachia, Vol. XXX, No. 1.
Journal of the Mountain Club of South Africa, 1952.
New Zealand Alpine Journal, 1953.
Die Bergkamerad, 1953.
Club Alpino Italiano, Sez. di Milano, Boll. Mensile, 1953.

The 1953 number of the *S.M.C. Journal* (No. 144) is practically a Cairngorms number, with articles by W. D. Brooker on winter climbing on Lochnagar and the Cairngorms, Tom Patey on the ascent of Parallel Gully B, and R. B. Frere on aircraft recovery in Braeriach and incidental pursuits. In addition a substantial section of new climbs relates to the area. The 1954 number is of less direct interest, but raises an important point regarding club and journal abbreviations. Confusion arises between ourselves and the Climbers Club; we find C.C. applied to both clubs, C.G.C. to ourselves, and one of our members erroneously ascribed to the Climbers Club in full. As senior club with the senior journal we would appear to have prior claim to the simple abbreviations C.C. and *C.C.J.*

ERRATUM

C.C.J., Vol. XVI, p. 251, line 1, for "schillings" read "shillings."

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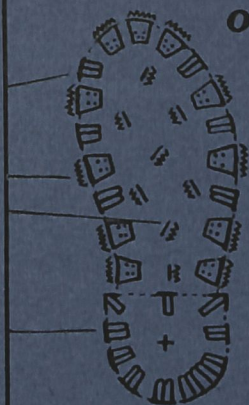
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